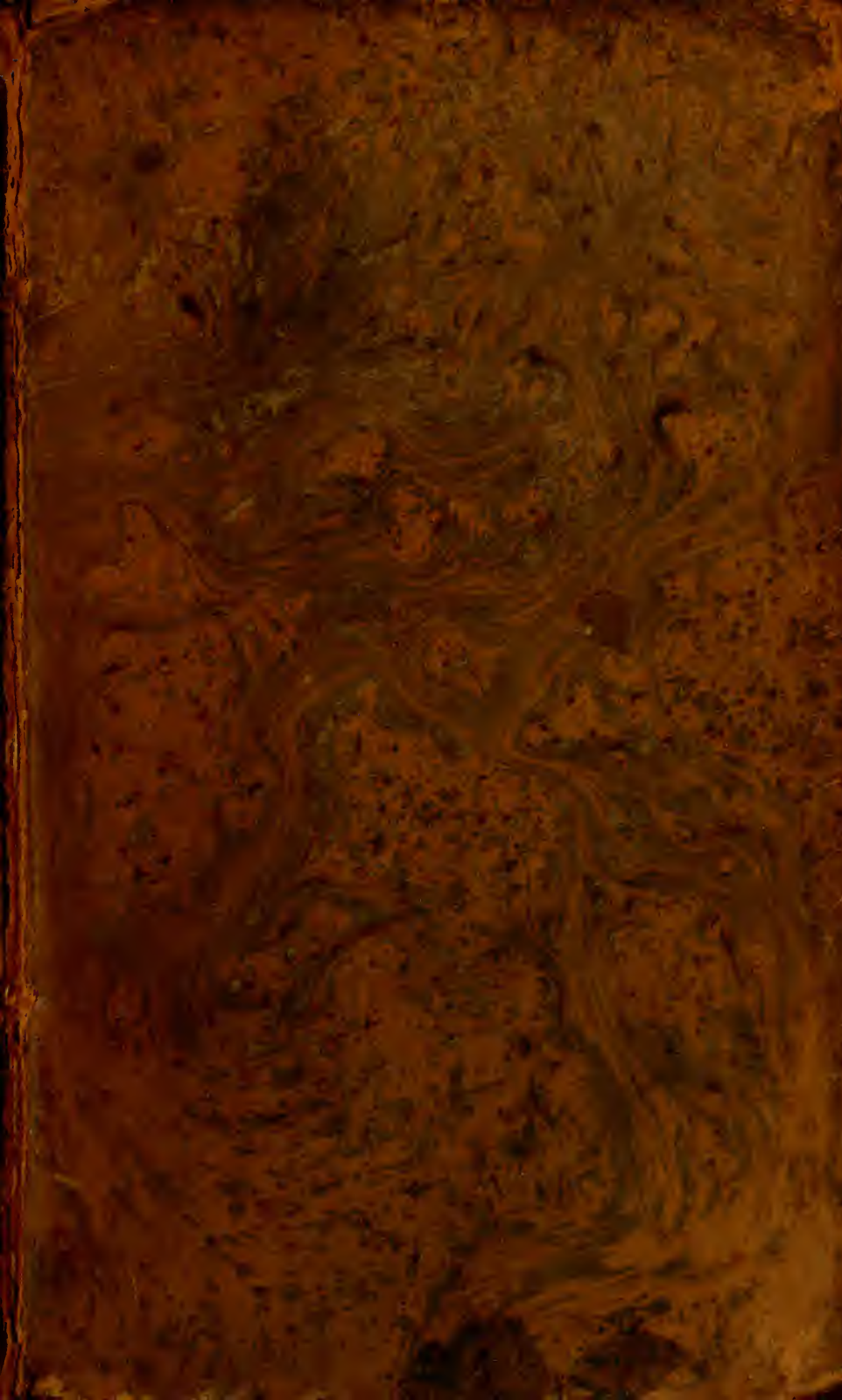




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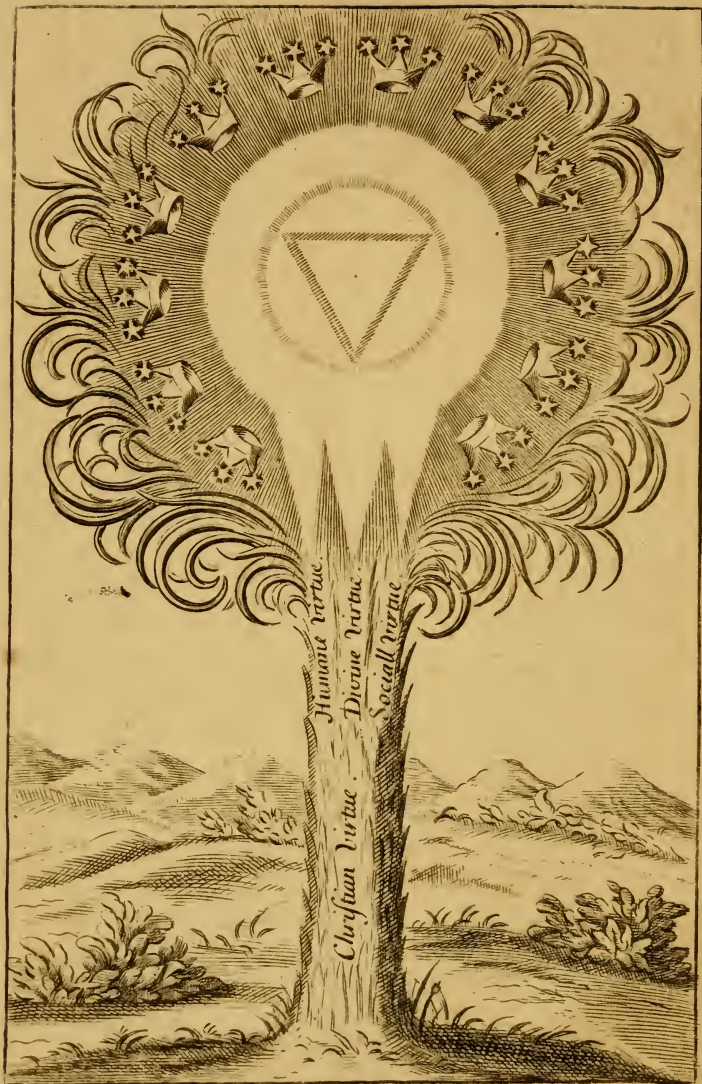


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THE
CHRISTIAN LIFE,
FROM ITS
BEGINNING,
TO ITS
Consummation in GLORY;
TOGETHER WITH
The several Means and Instruments of Christianity
conducting thereto.

WITH
Directions for private DEVOTION,
AND
FORMS of PRAYER
Fitted to the several States of CHRISTIANS.

By JOHN SCOTT, D.D. Rector of
St. Giles's in the Fields, London.

In FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

The TWELFTH EDITION, Corrected.

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C. Alston R.P.D. Hen.
Episc. Lond. à Sacris.

Junii 15.
1668.

To the Right Honourable

A N D

Right Reverend Father in G O D,

H E N R Y,

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N,

And one of his Majesty's most Honourable
Privy-Council, &c.

My Lord,

THAT I presume to lay these
Papers at your Lordship's Feet
is not because I imagine they *de-*
serve, but because I am conscious
they *need* so great a Patronage.
Not but that, were the Discourses
they contain as great and meritor-
ious as their Argument, they
might safely shelter themselves un-
der their own Deserts, and chal-
lenge *Homage* instead of begging
Protection ; but though I have

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A

done

The Epistle Dedicatory.

done my best Endeavour to treat this great Theme suitably to its own native Majesty, yet I am very sensible it hath not escaped the too common Fate of all such sublime and excellent Subjects, which is to be fouled and sullied by coarse handling. But my Lot falling in this unhappy Age, wherein the best *Church* and *Religion* in the World are in such apparent Danger of being crucified, like their blessed Author, between those two Thieves (and both, alas, impenitent ones) *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*, I thought myself obliged not to sit still as an unconcerned Spectator of the *Tragedy*, but in my little Sphere, and according to my poor Ability, to endeavour its Prevention: And considering that the most effectual Means the *Romanists* have

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have used to subvert *this* Church, which they so much *envy*, and all the Reformations do so much *admire* and *depend* on, hath been to *divide* her own Children from her, and *arm* them against her, by starting new Opinions among them, and ingaging their Zeal (which was wont to be employed to better Purposes) in hot Disputes about the *Modes* and *Circumstances* of her Worship; I thought a Discourse of the *Christian Life*, which is the proper Sphere of Christian Zeal, might be a good Expedient to take Men off from those dangerous *Contentions* which were *kindled* and are *fed* and *blown* by such as design our common Ruin. For sure did our People thoroughly understand what it is to be Christians *indeed*, and how much Duty that

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implies, they could never find so much Leisure as they do to quarrel and wrangle about *Trifles*.

This, my Lord, is the sincere Design of what I here present to your Lordship; and however it may *succeed*, I have this Satisfaction that I *meant well*, and have exprest my Good Will to this poor *envied* Church, whose truly Primitive Constitution, pure and undefiled Religion, I shall always admire and reverence; and whatsoever her Fate may be, I am chained to her Fortunes by my *Reason* and *Conscience*, and shall ever esteem it more eligible to be crnsht by her Fall, which God avert, than to flourish and triumph on her Ruins.

But among the *many* ill Omens that threaten our Church, there
is

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is *one* which seems to presage its Prosperity; and that is, that such Eminent Stations in it as your Lordship's, are so excellently supplied. For although whether the Part you are designed for, be to grace her *Triumphs* or her *Funeral*, is known only to the sovereign Disposer of Events; yet this, *my Lord*, all that wish well to our Church conclude, that God bestowed *You* upon her as a Token of Love. For which they have sufficient Warrant even from the daily Experienced they have of the Prudence and Vigilance of your Government, the Piety, Integrity, and Generosity of your Temper, of your invincible Loyalty to your Prince, your undaunted Zeal for the reformed Religion, and your grave and obliging Deportment towards

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all you converse with. I shall trouble your Lordship no farther, but conclude this Address with that which I am sure is the hearty Prayer of all your honest Clergy, that the God of Heaven would long continue your Lordship a Blessing to the Church, and to this Diocese, an Honour to your Sacred Order, and the Noble Stock you descend from ; and if what I here present prove but so prosperous as to do some good in the World, and obtain your Lordship's Acceptance, it will be a noble Compensation of this well-meant Endeavour. I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Humble

and most Obedient Servant,

JOHN SCOTT.

THE P R E F A C E.

I SHALL not trouble the Reader with a long Apology for the Publication of the ensuing Treatise, though I might plead (as other Authors do) the Importunity of Friends, whose Judgments I very much reverence. For, to say the Truth, I do by no Means think that in an Affair of this Nature it is safe or fit for a Man to be over-borne by the Persuasions of those whose Judgments he hath just Cause to suspect may be bribed by their Friendships. And therefore had I not hoped that in such an Age as this, (wherein through our own Divisions and Debaucheries, both in Opinion and Practice, and the bellish Contrivances of our Enemies, we have such a dismal Prospect of Things before us) these Papers might be of some Use to Religion and the Souls of Men, I would never have

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troubled the World with them; but hoping they might, I have ventured upon that Reason to publish them.

I have for some Years been a sorrowful Spectator of the black Cloud that is gathering over my Native Country, and I must confess have not been without my Share of the Fears and Anxieties of the Age; but being at last quite sick of looking downwards upon this uncomfortable Scene of Things, I had no other Way to relieve my oppressed Thoughts, but to raise them above this miserable World, and entertain them with the Comforts of Religion, and the Hopes of a better State beyond the Grave; wherein, I thank God, I have found such Rest and Satisfaction of Mind as rendered my blackest Apprehensions of the ensuing Storm very tolerable. And now because I would not eat my Morsel alone, and enjoy my Satisfaction to myself, I have endeavoured by this following Treatise of Heaven, and the Way thither, to break and distribute it among my distressed Neighbours; that so by
carrying

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carrying their Minds from the dismal Expectations into the quiet and happy Regions above, and directing their Lives and Actions thither, I might communicate to them the blessed Art how to live happily in a distracted World. And methinks, when our present State is so perplexed and uncertain, we should be more than ordinarily concerned to make sure of something, and to provide for a future Well-being, that so we may not be miserable in both Worlds.

As for the Argument I have undertaken, I may without Breach of Modesty say, it is a great and noble one; it is the Christian Life, which next to the Angelical, approaches nearest to the Life of God. But as for the Management of it, all that I can say is this, I have employed my best Thoughts and Skill about it; and if after this, I have any where wronged or misrepresented it, it is more my Unhappiness than my Fault. Perhaps it may be thought that in the first three Chapters I have discoursed more speculatively, than it is fit in a Book that
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is designed for common Use and Edification; but it may be when the Reader hath considered the Nature of the Arguments I have there handled, and how necessarily they fall in with my Design, he will be convinced that it was unavoidable. And yet I doubt not but with a little Diligence and Attention of Mind the plainest Reader may be able to comprehend the main Reason and Evidence of what I drive at.

In the first place I thought it would be necessary, in treating of the Christian Life, to give some Account of the blessed End it refers to, that so, from the Nature of that, we might be the better able to judge of the Necessity and Usefulness of those Means which Christianity prescribes in order to it. And this I have endeavoured in the first Chapter; where I have only so far explained the Nature of the heavenly State and Felicities, as was necessary to light and conduct us through the ensuing Design.

In the second place, I judged it would be no less expedient to give some general

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ral Account of what kinds of Means are necessary to our obtaining this End; that so we might be convinced how requisite both the principal and instrumental Parts of the Christian Life are to our everlasting Happiness. And this I have attempted in the second Chapter; wherein, from the Consideration of the vast Distance there is between the pure and blessed State of Heaven, and this corrupt and degenerate State of Human Nature, I have endeavoured to shew, that it is not only necessary for us to practise and acquire those Christian Virtues, in the Perfection whereof the heavenly Bliss consists, but that to enable us to practise, acquire and improve them, there are sundry other instrumental Duties indispensably necessary; which Duties, as I have there proved, are of no other Use or Significancy in Religion, than as they are Means of Virtue and Piety.

And having thus distributed the Means into their proper Kinds and Order, I have in the third Chapter treated largely of the first Kind, to wit, the Practice

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tice of the Christian Virtues; in which I confess I have neither handled the particular Virtues in their full Extent and Latitude, nor inforced them with all their moral Reasons; that being done already to excellent Purpose in those two incomparable Treatises of Holy Living and Dying, and of The Whole Duty of Man. Nor could I have done it without swelling this Discourse, which is large enough already, into a Volume too large for common Use. And indeed all that was necessary to my Purpose, was only so far to explain the Nature of each particular Virtue, as that the Reader might thereby understand what is meant by them; but that which most concerned me in pursuance of my main Design, was to prove that the Practice of every Virtue is an essential Part of the Christian Life, and a necessary Means to the blessed End of it. And accordingly, as I have shewn from the express Commands of our Religion, our indispensable Obligation to practise every Virtue; so I have endeavoured to shew how in the
Practice

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Practice of it we do naturally grow up to the heavenly State; as, on the contrary, how in the course of a sinful Life we do by a necessary Efficiency gradually sink ourselves into the State of the Damned. For I have proved at large, that there is something of Heaven and Hell in the very Nature of each particular Virtue and Vice, and that in the Perfection of these two opposite Qualities consists the main Happiness and Misery of those two opposite States. From whence it will necessarily follow, that as in the Practice of the one or the other we grow more virtuous or vicious, so proportionably we rise up towards Heaven, or sink down towards Hell by a fatal Tendency of Nature. The Truth of which is not only acknowledged by the generality of Christian Writers, but also by the best and wisest of the Heathen Philosophers; though this, I think, is the first Attempt that hath been made to derive the Heavenly and Hellish States, from the nature of the particular Virtues and Vices. I pray God that what I have
said

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said may but engage some more skilful Pen in the Prosecution of this noble Argument. For I know nothing in the World that can be more effectual to engage Men to be substantially Religious, to take them off from Hypocrisy and Formality, from all presumptuous Hopes and false Dependencies, than their being thoroughly convinced of this Truth, that the eternal Happiness or Misery of Souls is founded in their Virtue or Vice, and that there is as inseparable a Connection between Grace and Glory, Sin and Hell, as there is between Fire and Heat, Frost and Cold, or any other necessary Cause and its Effect. For if they were but thoroughly persuaded of this, they would easily discern what wretched Non-sense it is, to think of going to Heaven, or escaping Hell, whilst they continue in any wilful Course of Disobedience to the Laws of Virtue.

Having thus treated at large of the first Sort of Means by which the End of our Christian Life is to be obtained, I proceed in the fourth Chapter, which is
the

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the largest of all, to give an Account of the second, viz. the Instrumental Duties of Christianity, which are enjoined us as Means, subservient to our Practice, Acquisition and Improvement of those Heavenly Virtues in the Perfection whereof our chief Happiness consists. And for the more distinct handling of these, I have considered Men under a Threefold State with respect to the Christian Life ; First, as entering into it ; Secondly, as actually engaged in it ; Thirdly, as perfecting and improving themselves by Perseverance in it ; to each of which I have appropriated such of the instrumental Duties as I conceived did more especially belong to them. It is true, some of the Duties here treated of are not purely instrumental, but of a mixt Nature, such as Faith, Prayer, actual Dedication of our good Works to God, &c. which are essential Parts of Divine Worship, and, as such, do belong to those Divine Virtues, the Perfection whereof makes a principal Part of the everlasting Happiness of Souls. But here I have considered them

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only as Means and Instruments in the use of which we are to acquire and perfect those Beatifical Virtues. And of this sort of Means I do not remember any one Particular recommended in Holy Scripture, but what hath been here treated of. Upon some indeed I have insisted much more briefly, than upon others, because I find them already largely accounted for in other practical Books, and especially in those two excellent Treatises above named; but of those which they either cursorily touch, or take no Notice of at all, I thought myself obliged to give a larger Account.

*From the whole I would recommend to the pious Reader the Consideration of the admirable Structure and Contrivance of the Practical Part of Christianity, which having proposed to us an End so great and sublime, and so highly worthy of our most vigorous Prosecutions, hath also furnished us with such choice and effectual Means of all Sorts to attain it. The Consideration of which would be in itself a great Inducement to me to
believe*

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believe Christianity a Divine Religion ; though I were utterly unacquainted with its External Evidence and Motives of Credibility. For it can never enter into my Head that such a rare and exquisite Contrivance to make Men good and happy, could ever owe its Original to the meer invention of a Carpenter's Son, and a company of illiterate Fishermen. Especially considering how far it excells the Moral Precepts even of those divine Philosophers who believed the future State of a blessed Immortality, and exercised their best Wit in prescribing Rules to guide and direct Men thither.

And having given this large account of the instrumental Duties of the Christian Life, and also inforced the several Divisions of them with proper Arguments and Motives, I thought fit to add a fifth Chapter, wherein I have given some Rules for the more profitable reading of this practical Discourse, and also some general Direction for the Exercise of our private Religion in all the different States of the Christian Life, together with certain

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Forms of private Devotion fitted for each State. In which I have supposed, what I doubt is very deplorable Truth, viz. that the generality of Christians, after their Initiation by Baptism into the Publick Profession of Christianity, are so unhappy as to be seduced either through bad Example or Education into a vicious State of Life; and that consequently from thence they must take their first start into the thorough Practice of Christianity. Not that I make the least doubt, but that there are a great many excellent Christians, who by the Blessing of God upon their pious Education, have been secured from this Calamity, and trained up from their Infancy under a prevailing Sense of God and Religion; and therefore for such as these, as there is no need of that solemn method of Repentance prescribed in the first Section of the fourth Chapter, so neither is there of those first penitential Prayers in this fifth Chapter, which are accommodated to that State. For these Persons have long since been actually engaged in the Christian Life, and,

as

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as it is to be supposed, have made considerable Improvements in it; and therefore as they are only concerned in the Duties of the second and third States of the Christian Life, so they are only to use the Prayers which are fitted to those States, which with some variation of those Phrases which suppose the past Course of our Life to have been vicious, they may easily accommodate to their own Condition. But the Design of this Discourse is not only to conduct them onwards in their Way who have already entered upon the Christian Life, but also to reduce those to it, who have been so unhappy as to wander into vicious Courses; or rather, though it serves both Purposes, it is wholly designed for the same Persons, viz. to seek and bring back those lost Sheep who have strayed from the Paths of Christian Piety and Virtue, and then to lead them on through all the intermediate Stages to the happy State of immortal Pleasures at the end of them. And now if what hath been said should, by the Blessing of God, obtain its designed

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*effect upon any Person, I ask no other
Requital for all the Pains it hath cost
me, but his earnest Prayers to God for
me, that after my best Endeavours to
guide and direct him to Heaven, I may
not fall short of it myself.*

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O F T H E

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

C H A P. I.

*Concerning the ultimate End of the
Christian Life.*

IN order to our understanding what is the Nature, Use, and Excellency of any *Means*, it is necessary we should have a true and genuine notion of those peculiar *Ends* which they drive at. For the nature of them, as they are *Means*, consists in being serviceable to some *End*; but to what they are particularly serviceable, must be collected from the nature of those particular *Ends* whereunto they are directed. And therefore till we know what those particular *Ends* are, it is impossible we should know whether they are *Means* or no, or, which is the same thing, whether they are serviceable to any *End* or *Purpose*.

It being therefore the Design of this *Work* to explain the nature of the *Christian Life*, it will be necessary (for the clearing of our way) to give some account of the blessed *End* for which
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it is intended ; which will very much contribute to our right understanding of the great Usefulness and Subserviency of each part of it thereunto. Therefore,

I. I shall endeavour to shew what is the peculiar *End* of the *Christian Life*.

II. Wherein the true Nature of this *End* consists.

I. As for the *End* of the *Christian Life*, we are assured from Scripture, that it is no other but *Heaven* itself; that state of endless *Bliss* and *Happiness* which God hath prepared in the World above, for the reception of all those, *who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality*. That this is the *End* of the *Christian Life*, is evident from hence, because it is every where proposed by our Saviour, and his Apostles; as the chief good of a Christian, and the Supreme Motive to all Christian Virtue. For so St. *John*, that Bosom-favourite of our Saviour, assures us, that *This is the Promise which Christ hath promised us, even Eternal Life*, 1 *John* ii. 25. And if we look into the Gospel of St. *John*, who hath more largely recorded our Saviour's Sermons and Discourses than any other Evangelist, we shall find *Eternal Life* still proposed by him as the super-eminent Promise to encourage and persuade Men to the Profession and Practice of *Christianity*. For so *John* iv. 36. it is proposed by our Saviour as that which is the Harvest of a Christian, to which like the Husbandman's ploughing and sowing, all our care and endeavour is to be directed; *He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto eternal Life*. Consonantly whereunto St. *Paul* tells

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us, that *he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*, Gal. vi. 8. And this, as our Saviour tells us, is the great Reward which he gives to all those that hear and follow him. *John* x. 27, 28. and this is the great Argument which he every where insists on, that he that believeth hath *Life Everlasting*, that whosoever heareth his Word hath *Life Everlasting*, and that his Commandment is *Life Everlasting*. And *Rom.* vi. 22. *Everlasting Life* is expressly said to be the end of *having our fruit unto Holiness* ; and as such we are bid to direct our Actions unto it, to *believe in Christ unto Everlasting Life*, 1 *Tim.* i. 16. to do good, to this end, that we *may lay hold upon Eternal Life*, 1 *Tim.* vi. 18, 19. to *look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, &c.* *Heb.* xii. 2. And therefore Heaven is described to be the Christian *Canaan*, to which we are to direct all our steps, whilst we are travelling through this *World*, *Heb.* xi. 14, 15, 16. And the whole Life of a Christian is expressed by *seeking it* : *Mat.* vi. 33. *Heb.* xiii. 14. *Col.* iii. 1. And the *incorruptible Crown* is affirmed to be as much the End of the race of the *Christian Life*, as those *corruptible Crowns* were of the races in the *Olympick Games*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 25. For it is to *Eternal Glory* that we are called, 1 *Pet.* v. 10. 2 *Thess.* ii. 14. and in the discharge of all that Duty whereunto we are called. we are to *look to this blessed Hope as our great End and Encouragement*, *Tit.* ii. 13.

This I have the more largely insisted upon, because of a great mistake that many persons have
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lain under in this matter; which is, that the *Glory of God* is the only ultimate *End* of a Christian, and that this is a distinct *End* from *Heaven*; the first of which, I confess, is very *true*, but the last absolutely *false*. That the *Glory of God* is the last end of a Christian, is evident from those Texts which bid us *do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. and which make the *Glory of God* to be the point in which all the *fruits of righteousness* do concenter, Phil. i. 11. which propose this as the *End* of all religious Performances, *that God in all things may be glorified*, 1 Pet. iv. 11. and affirm, that it is to this purpose that we are chosen to be Christians, that we should be to the *Praise of his Glory*, Eph. i. 12. But that the *glory of God* is no distinct *End* from our being made partakers of the *Happiness of Heaven*, is as evident from hence, that this *Glory* consists not in any thing that we can add or contribute to Him, whose essential *Glory* is so immense and secure, that there is nothing we can do, can either increase or diminish it; and there is no other *Glory* can redound to him from any thing without, but what is the Reflection of his own natural Rays. He understands himself too well, to value himself either the more or the less for the Praises or Dispraises of his Creatures. For he is enough of Stage and Theatre to himself, and hath the same satisfying prospect of his own *Glory* in the midst of all the loud *Blasphemies of Hell*, as among the perpetual *Hallelujahs of Heaven*. And having so, it cannot be supposed that he should enjoin us to praise and glorify him for the sake of any Good or Advantage that can accrue to *Himself* by it, or

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out of any other Pleasure he takes in hearing himself applauded and commended by us, than he doth in any other Act that is decent and reasonable in its own Nature; but it is *therefore*, he will have us praise him, because he knows it is for *Our* Good, and highly conduces, as it is a most reasonable Action, to the Perfection and Happiness of our reasonable Natures; because our praising him naturally excites us to imitate him, and to transcribe into *our own* Natures those Adorable Perfections, which we do so admire and extol in *His*. So that to pursue our own Perfection and Happiness, is to glorify God according to his own Design and Intention; who requires us to Glorify *him* for no other purpose, but that thereby we may glorify *ourselves*. And indeed *our* Happiness is *God's* Glory, even as *all* other worthy *Effects* are the Glory of their *Causes*. It is *He* that gives being to it, and consequently *He* that is glorified by it. It being nothing but the Resplendency of his own Almighty Goodness, or his own out-stretched Rays shining back upon Himself. And therefore *we* aim at God's Glory just as *He Himself* doth, when we aim to be as happy as He would have us, that is, when we pursue Heaven and co-operate with his infinite Goodness, whose great Design is to advance us to that blessed Condition in which we shall Glorify him for ever, and be Everlasting Monuments of his overflowing Benignity. So that whether we call our last End *Heaven*, or the *Glory of God*, it is all but one and the same Thing; since by obtaining Heaven, we shall Glorify him according to his own *Design* and *Intention*. And this, I think,

may suffice to shew, what is the true ultimate *End* of the *Christian Life*. But then

II. It will be yet further necessary for our clearing the Way to the Design in Hand, to enquire what *Kind of Happiness* this is; which when we understand, we shall be the better able to comprehend what *Duties* or *Means* are necessary for the obtaining it. And this Enquiry will be easily resolved, by considering the Nature of *those* for whom it was prepared and intended. For all *Happiness* consists in the *free* and *vigorous Exercise* of the Faculties of Nature, about Objects that are suitable to themselves. There is indeed a *privative Happiness*, which is nothing but *Indolence*, or *Freedom from Pain and Misery*: and this consists not so much in the *Exercise*, as in the *Rest* and *Quiet* of the Faculties. And herein the soft and restive *Epicureans* placed the whole Happiness of a Man: In which, I confess, they would not be very much mistaken, if there were no Happiness belonging to a Man beyond that Animal and Sensual one, in which the Disciples of this *Atheistical Philosopher* placed their chief Good. For the greatest Part of the Pleasures of Sense indeed are merely *Privations* of Misery, and short Reprieves from the Griefs and Troubles of a wretched Life. For what else is our *Ease* and *Rest*, but only the removal of our *Pain* and *Weariness*? which being removed, the Pleasure is presently over, and then we grow weary again of our *Rest* and *Ease*; till *Pain* and *Weariness* return and sweeten them, and give them a fresh and new Relish. For when we are weary of *Rest*, we are fain to recreate ourselves with *Action*, and when

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we are weary of *Action*, to refresh ourselves with *Rest*, and so round again in the same Circle. Thus the greatest Part of the Pleasure of *Eating* and *Drinking* consists in asswaging the Pain of our *Hunger* and *Thirst*. For when *this* is over, you see the Pleasure ceases; and till it returns again, every fresh Morsel is but a new Load to a tired Digestion. So that in short, the greatest Part of those *sensual Felicities* which we do here enjoy, are only short Intermissions of the *Pains* and *Uneasinesses* of a wretched Life: But if there were no other *Happiness* belonging to a Man, but what consists in not being sensible of *Misery*, it were much more desirable to be a *Stone* than a *Man*, and the only Way for him to be perfectly happy, would be, to deprive himself of all *Sense* and *Perception*.

It is true, that which is *positive* in our Happiness can never be perfectly enjoyed by us, without a perfect *Indolence* and *Insensibility* of Pain; it being impossible for us to have a *perfect Sense* of any Thing, whilst we have the least touch or feeling of its *Contrary*. But were *Happiness* nothing else but a *non-perception* of *Misery*, it would have no *positive* Essence or Reality of its own, which is directly contrary to all human Experience. For we plainly feel, that our *Happiness* hath in it, not only a *Rest* from *Evil*, but a *grateful Motion* to *Good*, and that as our *Pain* and *Misery* consists in an *acute* and *sensible Perception* of such Things as are most ungrateful to our Nature; so *Pleasure* or *Satisfaction* consists in a *vigorous Perception* of the contrary. So that besides *the not being miserable* (which is not so properly an *Essential Part* of Happiness, as a necessary *Disposition* to it, without

which the Faculties of our Natures will be indisposed to relish and perceive it) there is a *positive Happiness* which (as I said before) consists in a *constant, free and vigorous Exercise* of the Faculties about such Objects as are most convenient and suitable to their Natures. For *Happiness* in the general includes *Perfection* and *Pleasure*, both which are necessarily included in *such* an Exercise of the Faculties. For *then* the Faculties are *Perfect*, *when* they are *freely, constantly and vigorously* employed about such objects, as are more congruous to their several Natures; when they are recovered from all *indispositions*, whether *natural*, or *moral*, to those proper motions and exercises for which they were framed; and do freely, constantly, and without any clog or interruption direct all their courses towards such Objects as are their natural Centers. And *then* the Faculties are most *pleased* and *delighted* too *when* they are most vigorously exercised about that which is most suitable to them; when they are not only determined to such Objects as are most agreeable to their Natures, but do also act upon and exert themselves towards them with the greatest *Sprightliness* and *Vigour*.

These things I thought meet to premise concerning *Happiness* in the *General*, as being very needful to the clearer resolution of the present Enquiry, *viz.* Wherein consists the *Heaven* or *Happiness* of a *Man*. In short therefore, the proper *Heaven* and *Happiness* of a *Man*, considered as a *rational being*, consists in the *constant, free, and sprightful Exercise* of his Faculties about such Objects as are most convenient to his *rational Nature*,

Nature, which consisting wholly of *Understanding* and *Will*, that is, of a Faculty of *Knowing* and a Faculty of *Chusing*, the most suitable Objects of it are such as are most worthy to be *known*, and most worthy to be *chosen*. When therefore the *Understanding* is always *vigorously* exercised in seeing and contemplating the most glorious and excellent *Truths*, and the *Will* is always *vigorously* employed in choosing and embracing the most desirable *Goods*, then is the whole Rational Nature *Happy*. Now if you cast abroad your thoughts over the whole extent of *Being*, you will presently find that there is nothing in it so worthy to be *known* and *chosen* as *God*; whose Power being the source and fountain of all *Truth*, that is, of all that either *is* or *is possible*, and whose Nature being the subject of all *rational Perfection*, wherein it originally resides, and from whence 'tis derived to all the Rational Creation; you must upon these accounts necessarily allow *Him* to be infinitely the most worthy Object in all the World of *Beings*, for our *Understanding* to *contemplate* and our *Will* to *chuse*. And if so, then the very Life and Quintessence of the *Heaven* of a *Man* considered as a *Reasonable Being*, must needs consist in a close and intimate *Knowledge* of *God*, and a Free and Uncontroverted *Choice* of *Him*.

But that we may more fully comprehend the Nature of this *Happiness*, it will be needful that we should more distinctly explain, what these two Essential *Acts* of it do import, and what *Happiness* is included in them. And

I. The *Happiness* of a *Man* consists in a free and intimate *Knowledge* of *God*, for our *Under-*

standing hath naturally as strong an Appetite to *Truth*, as our *Stomach* hath to *Food*, and as grateful a Relish of it, when it hath once discovered it, as an *Hungry-man* hath of a *pleasant Morsel*. And though in this Life its *Appetite* is many times *palled* and *deadned*, partly through the *Difficulty* of *knowing*, occasioned either by the natural *Indispositions* of its Organs, or the inveterate *Prejudices* of a bad Education; and partly by being continually employed in *secular Cares* and *Pursuits*, which do perpetually *divert*, and so by Degrees *wean* it from its natural Inclination to *Truth*: Yet when we go from this World, and leave these Causes behind us, which give such a check to its *Appetite*, doubtless its hunger after *Knowledge* will immediately revive, and there will be no Possibility of ever satisfying it without it.

Suppose we then the future World to be inhabited with a Company of *Intellectual Beings*, that do almost *vehemently gasp* after the *Knowledge* of *Truth*: What can there be imagined more grateful to them, than to be admitted to the very Fountain of all *Truth* and *Reality*, there to quench their Thirst, and satisfy their infinite Desires, with the *free* and *easy*, but *still fresh* Discoveries of his infinite *Glories* and *Perfections*? Where will they be able to fix their *greedy Eyes* with comparably that Pleasure and Delight, as upon the *Mysterious Trin-un-Divinity*, which is the eternal *Author* of all *Being*, the *Root* of all *Good*, and the *Rule* and *Source* of all *Perfection*? But then supposing, what is the Case of these *Blessed Contemplators*, that their Minds are so *raised*, and their Apprehensions are rendered so *unspeakably quick* and *sagacious*,

gacious, as that they can *All* know whatsoever they have a Mind to, without the *Difficulty* of *Study*, and presently discern the Dependance and Connection of Things without any *puzzling Discourse*, or *laborious Deduction*: With what incomparable Satisfaction must they needs peruse that infinite *Volume* of the Divine Being and *Perfections*!

Now that in that *Blessed State* they have unspeakably *clearer* and more *perspicuous* Apprehensions of Things, than ever they had *here*, that noble Passage of St. Paul assures us, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *For now we see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face; now I know in Part, but then I shall know even also as I am known*: that is, now our Knowledge of Divine Things is very *obscure* and *imperfect*, they being shewn us as it were through a Glass, on purpose to give us but a *glimpse* of them; but when we come to *Heaven*, we shall *look close* upon them, and have a far *clearer*, and more *distinct* Apprehension of them. Then we shall *know* God as truly as He *knows* us, and have as *real* and *certain* Apprehensions of his *All-glorious Being*, as He hath of Ours. So that in *Heaven*, you see, the *Eyes* of those *Blessed Minds*, that inhabit it, are so *invigorated*, that they can gaze upon the Sun without *dazzling*: contemplate the pure and immaculate Glories of the Deity, without being *confounded* with their *Brightness*; and their Understanding being thus *exalted* they must needs apprehend more at *one single View*, than we can do in *Volumes* of Discourse, and *tedious long Trains* of Deduction.

And then enjoying as they do, a most *perfect Repose* both from *within* and *without* them, they

are never *disturbed* in their *eager Contemplations*; which having such a vast *Horizon* of *Truth* and *Glory* round about them, are still discovering farther, and farther, and so *continually* entertained with fresh *Wonders* and *Delights*. What an infinite deal of Pleasure then must that *All-glorious Object* afford to such *raised* and *elevated* Minds, which like *transparent Windows*, let in without any Labour or Difficulty all that *Divine* and *Heavenly Light* which freely offers itself unto, and shines for ever round about them; and which by every *new* Discovery of God, and of these *bottomless Secrets* and *Mysteries* of his Nature, are still enlarged to discover *more*, and still have *new* Discoveries offering themselves, as fast as they are enlarged to receive them. This of *itself* is so great a Part of Heaven, that St. *John* himself seems to be at a loss how to imagine any Heaven beyond it. 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved, now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, that is, in Glory and Happiness, for we shall see him as he is.* But then

II. The *Heaven* or *Happiness* of a *Man* consists also in a free and undistracted *Choice* of God; that is, in *choosing* him for a rule and Pattern of our *Natures*, and for the Object of our *Love*, *Adoration* and *Dependance*; all which, (as I shall shew hereafter) are *Beatifical Acts*, and do abundantly contribute to the *Happiness* of *Reasonable Creatures*. For *Happiness*, (as hath been premised) consists not in *Rest*, but in *Motion*, and there is no *Motion* can contribute to the *Happiness* of any Being, but what is suitable to its own Nature.

Nature. Now what *Motion* can be more suitable to the Nature of a *Reasonable Creature*, than to Love and Adore the Author of its *Being* and *Well-Being* ; to bow to the *Will* of the *Almighty Sovereign*, and to imitate the *Perfections* of the *Supreme Standard* and *Pattern* of all *Reasonable Beings* ; to rely and depend on his *infinite Power*, that is always conducted by his *infinite Wisdom* and *Goodness* ? All which are founded upon so many strong, evident and undeniable *Reasons*, that the very naming of them is sufficient to justify them to our Faculties, and demonstrate them to be infinitely agreeable to the most *fundamental Principles* of our *Reasonable Nature*. And being so, it is impossible but that of themselves they should be exceeding *joyous* and *blisful* ; for as the *sensitive* Nature is most gratified with those Acts that have most of *Sense* in them, so is the *Rational* with those that have most of *Reason* in them. And certainly those have most *Reason* in them which are terminated upon Objects which most *deserve* them ; and what Object can so well *deserve* to be acted upon by *Reasonable Beings* as God ? or what *Acts* can they so reasonably exert upon him, as those of *Love* and *Adoration*, *Homage* and *Imitation*, *Trust* and *Dependance* ? But as no *Acts* of *Sense* can be very grateful to our *Sensitive Nature*, so long as we exert them either with *Repugnance*, or *Indifferency*, so neither can any Acts of *Reason* be to our *Rational* ; the Pleasure of all Acts, whether *Sensitive* or *Rational*, consisting (as I shewed before) in the *Sprightfulness* and *Vigour* of them. And this is the Cause why Men now find so little Felicity in these most *Rational* Acts of *Godliness*,
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because by their own *bad Customs* they have rendered themselves *averse*, or at least very *cold* and *indifferent* to them, which necessarily renders us *dead* and *listless* in the Exercise of them, and consequently causes them to go off with *little Gust*, if not with an *ungrateful Relish*. But even in this *imperfect State* we find by Experience, that the more our *corrupted Nature* discharges and disburdens itself of those *vicious Indispositions*, which do so *cramp* and *arrest* it in these its *Heavenly Operations*, the more it is *pleased* still and *delighted* in them : Yea, and that when it is so far inured to a *Godly Life* as to be able to practise the several *Virtues* of it, but with the same Degree of *Activity* and *Vigour* as it was wont to do its most *beloved Lusts*, it is unspeakably more *pleased* and *satisfied*, and finds more *Sweetness* by a thousand Degrees, in its *Love* and *Adoration*, *Obedience* and *Imitation of God*, than ever it did in the highest *Relishes* of *Epicurism* and *Sensuality* ; that the more perfectly we *love* and *adore*, &c. the more of *Heaven* we taste in these *blessed Acts*, and that, when by a *long* and *constant* Practice of them we have once rendered them *natural* to us, we enjoy such an *Heaven upon Earth* in the *easy*, *free* and *vigorous Exercise* of them, as we would not exchange for all the Pleasures and Felicities which the World can afford us. And yet, God knows, the most perfect State of *Godliness* which we attain to *here*, hath so many Degrees of *Imperfection* in it, and in this we are so disturbed and interrupted by *bodily Indispositions*, and the *Troubles* and *Necessities* of this present Life, that from the *Joy* and *Pleasure* which results from it here, we can hardly

guess

guess at those *ravishing Felicities* which will spring out of it *hereafter*. When we shall be perfectly released from all the Incumbrances of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and *Sin*, when we shall be translated into a *free* and *quiet State*, wherein we shall have nothing else to do, but only to *know* and *love*, *obey* and *imitate*, and have no *Imperfection* either *natural* or *vicious*, to clog or disturb us in this our *beatifical Employment*. Wherein we shall act with all our *Vigour* and *Might*, and thrust forth the whole *Strength* of our Souls in every *Love* and every *Obedience*; so that every *Motion* of our Souls towards God, shall have the *Vebemence* of a *Rapture* in it, without the *Violence*. When, I say, we shall be *eternally* fixed in a State of such perfect *Freedom* and *Activity*, our *Happiness* must needs be as large as our *Desires*, and as great as our utmost *Capacity* or *Power* of *acting upon God*. For now we shall *imitate* the most *Perfect*, and *adore* the most *Adorable*, as much as *ever* we are *able*; that is, we shall perform with all our *Might* and *Vigour* the Acts that are most agreeable to our *Reasonable Nature*: and in the utmost *Vigour* of such *Acts* (as I have already shewed) consists our utmost *Happiness*.

Suppose we then a Society of *rational Beings* placed in such a State, wherein they have an Object of *infinite Perfections* always before them, and no *Evil* from *without* or *within* to check or divert them from exerting *all their Powers* upon him in the most *reasonable Actions*: Suppose them now to be moving with *unspeakable Vigour* and *Agility*, like so many *ever-living Orbs* about this their *ever-lasting Centre*; to be as full of *Love* and *Duty* to
him

him as ever their *Hearts* can hold; to be *copying* his *Perfections* and *adoring* his *Excellencies* with an uncontrollable *Freedom* and *Alacrity*, and breathing forth themselves to him in *cheerful Praises* and *rapturous Hallelujahs*; in a word, to be exercising themselves about him to their utmost *Strength* and *Power*, in all those *blessed Offices* which *his* Nature and *their* Relation to him call for: Suppose, I say, *all this*, and you have before ye that which is the very *top* and *flower* of the *Heaven* of a *reasonable Creature*; who in this *blessed state* is fixed, as it were in his own proper *Element*, where, without any *let* or *disturbance*, he freely *moves* and *acts* according to his most *natural Tendency* and *Inclination*.

And now by this time I think it is clear enough, that the *main* and *principal Part* of the *Heaven* of a *Man*, considered as a *reasonable Creature*, consists in *knowing* and *chusing* of God. But besides *this*, there are other blessed *Ingredients* of Heaven; the *principal* whereof is, the knowing and chusing *those* that are *most like* unto God; namely, the *blessed Jesus* in his *Human Nature* and the *Holy Angels* and *Saints*, who are *all* in their several Measures and Degrees the express and lively *Images* of God. And therefore if to know and chuse God be the *supreme* Felicity of Heaven, then doubtless the *next* to that is, to *know* and be *acquainted* with these blessed *Images* of him, and freely to *chuse* their *Company* and *Conversation*, and be entirely *united* to them in *Affection*; without which, it would be no Felicity to dwell in the *same place* with them. For to *cohabit* with *Jesus* and with *Saints* and *Angels*,
and

and not be *acquainted with*, and *united to* them in *Heart* and *Affection*, would be rather a *Burden* than a *Pleasure*. The Happiness therefore of being in their *Society*, consists in *knowing* and *chusing* them. And this is every where implied, where our being with *them* is mentioned as a part of our Heaven. Thus, 1 Thes. iv. 17. *to be ever with the Lord*, is the same thing with being *ever in Heaven* : but then 'tis to be ever with him upon *choice*; for so those Words imply, Phil. i. 23. *I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better*. And accordingly this is mentioned by the Apostle as a *dear Privilege* of our being Members of the *Christian Church*, whereby we are entitled to the *Society of Holy Myriads of Angels, of the general Assembly of the Church of the first-born, of God the Judge of all, of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and of Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. And indeed this must needs be an *inestimable Happiness*, not only to *cobabit*, but be *acquainted with*, and in *Heart* and *Will* *united* to this Blessed and Glorious Company. For what Soul that has any Spark of Cordial Love to *Jesus*, the *best Friend of Souls* that ever was, any *grateful remembrance* of what he *did* and *suffered* for our sakes ; would not esteem it a *mighty Felicity* to be admitted into his *Presence*, and to be an *Eye-witness* of the happy Change of his past *woful Circumstances* ? To see him that was so *cruelly treated*, so *barbarously vilified, tortured, and butchered* for our sakes, *raised* to the highest pitch of *Splendor* and *Dignity*, to be *Head* and *Prince* of all the *Hierarchy* of Heaven, to be *worshipped* and *celebrated* throughout all the noble *Choir of Arch-Angels*

gels and *Angels and Spirits of just Men made perfect*? Verily methinks had I only the Privilege to look in and see my dear and blessed Lord surrounded with all this Circle of Glories, it would be a most *Heavenly Consolation* to me, though I were sure never to partake of it. The very Communion I should have in the Joys of my Master, would be a Kind of Heaven at *Second-Hand* to me, and my Soul would be wondrous happy by *Sympathizing* with him in his *Felicity and Advancement*. But Oh! when that *Blessed Person* shall not only permit me to see his Glory, but introduce me into it, and make me *Partaker* of it; when I shall not only behold his *Beloved Face*, but be admitted into his *Dear Conversation*, and dwell in his *Arms and Embraces* for ever; when I shall hear him record the wondrous *Adventures* of his Love, through how many *woful Stages* he passed to rescue me from *Misery*, and make me *Happy*, and in the mean time shall have a most *ravishing Feeling* of that *Happiness*; how will my Heart spring with Joy, and burn with Love, and my Mouth overflow with *Praises and Thanksgivings* to him!

And as our Acquaintance with, and Choice of the *Blessed Jesus* must needs contribute vastly to our *Happiness*; so must also (though not in so high a Degree) our being *intimately acquainted and united* with *Saints and Angels*. Who being not only endowed with large and comprehensive *Understandings*, but also with perfect *Good-nature* and most generous *Charity*, must needs make *excellent Company*. For as their *Goodness* cannot but render their Conversation infinitely *free and benign*, so their great *Knowledge* must necessarily

render it equally *profitable* and *delightful*. And then being so *knowing* as they are, they must needs be supposed to *understand* all the *wise Arts* of *Endearment*; and being so *Good*, they must be also supposed to be continually *practising* them. And if so, what a *Heavenly Conversation* must theirs be, the *Scope* whereof is the most *glorious Knowledge*, and the *Law* whereof is the most *perfect Friendship*? Who would not be willing to leave a *foolish, froward, and ill-natured World*, for the blessed Society of these *wise Friends* and *perfect Lovers*? And what a *Felicity* must it be to spend an Eternity in such a *noble Conversation*! where we shall hear the *deep Philosophy* of Heaven communicated with *mutual Freedom* in the wise and amiable Discourses of *Angels* and of *glorified Spirits*; who without any *Reserve*, or *Affectation of Mystery*, without *Passion* or *Interest*, or *peevish Contention* for *Victory*, do *freely Philosophise*, and *mutually impart* the *Treasures* of each other's *Knowledge*. For since all *Saints* ~~there~~ are great *Philosophers*, and all *Philosophers* perfect *Saints*, we must needs suppose *Knowledge* and *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Charity* to be equally intermingled throughout all their *Conversation*; and being so what can be imagined more *delightful*! When therefore we shall leave this *impertinent* and *unsociable World*; and all our *good old Friends* that are gone to Heaven before us, shall meet us as soon as we are landed upon the *Shore of Eternity*, and with infinite *Congratulations* for our safe *Arrival* shall conduct us into the *Company* of the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, *Apostles* and *Martyrs*, and introduce us into an *intimate Acquaintance* with them, and
with

with all those *brave* and *generous* Souls, who by their glorious Examples have recommended themselves to the World; when we shall be *familiar Friends* with *Angels* and *Arch-angels*, and all the *Courtiers* of Heaven shall call us *Brethren*, and bid us *welcome* to their *Master's Joy*, and we shall be received into their glorious Society with all the tender Endearments and Caresses of those *Heavenly Lovers*; what a *mighty Addition* to our Happiness will this be!

There are indeed some other Additions to the Happiness of Heaven: such as the *Glory* and *Magnificence* of the *Place*, which is the *highest Heaven*, or the upper and purer Tracts of the *Æther*, which our Saviour calls *Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. and St. Paul the *third Heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. both which in the Phrase of that Age bespeak it to be a Place of *unspeakable Glory*; for so the *Jews* do commonly call this blessed Seat, the *third* or *Angel-bearing* Region of Heaven, by which they denote it to be the *Palace* of the *King* of the whole World, where his most glorious Courtiers do reside, and they also call it *Paradise*, in Allusion to the Earthly Paradise of *Eden*; because as *that* was the *Garden* of this *lower* World, so *this* is of the *whole Creation*. And though we have no *exact Description* of this Place in *Scripture*, and that perhaps because no human Language can describe it; yet since God hath chosen it for the *everlasting Theatre* of Bliss and Happiness, we may thence reasonably conclude that he hath most *exquisitely furnished* it with all Accommodations requisite to a most *happy* and *blissful* Life.

Besides

Besides which also there is the *everlasting Duration* of it, which is another great Accession to its Happiness. That such is the Nature of its Enjoyments, as that they do not, like all other Pleasures, *spend* and *waste* in the Fruition; that though it will be always *Feeding* our Faculties with new Delights, yet it will never be *exhausted*, but be always *equally*, because *infinitely*, distant from a Period. So that its Happiness consisting of an *infinite Variety* of Pleasure extended to an *infinite Duration*, it will be impossible for those that enjoy it to be either *cloyed* with the Repetition of it, or *tormented* with the Fear of losing it.

But these *two last* I only mention, because they do not so properly belong to our present Argument; which is only to explain the Nature of *Heaven* so far as is necessary to the right understanding of the Nature of those *Means* by which it is to be attained.

Now from what hath been said concerning this great *End* of the *Christian Life*, these *two* Things are to be inferred concerning the *Nature* of it.

I. That the *main* of Heaven consists not so much in any *outward* Possession, as in an *inward* State and Temper. For though Heaven be doubtless a most *glorious Place*, and all its blessed *Inhabitants* do possess and hold it by an everlasting *Tenure*, yet it is a great Mistake to imagine that the main Happiness of Heaven consists in living for ever in a *glorious Place*, which separated from all the rest of Heaven would be but a *poor* and *hungry* kind of Happiness. For *Life* is no otherwise a Happiness, than as it is the Principle of all our

pleasant and *grateful Perceptions*; and if we could live for ever without *perceiving*, it would be the same Thing to us, as if we were nothing but a Company of everlasting *Stones* and *Trees*; and what great Matter would it signify to live for ever in a *glorious Place*, unless we could be for ever effected by it with a *delightful Sense* and *Perception*; which is impossible, because all *delightful Sense* (as hath already been proved) arises out of the *vigorous Exercise* of our Faculties about such Objects as are suitable to them; but what can there be in the most *glorious Place* so suitable to a *Rational Mind* and *Will*, as to keep them for ever *vigorously* employed and exercised about it? It may indeed for a while employ the *Mind* in an eager Contemplation of its *new* and *surprising* Beauties; but how soon would the Mind disrelish it, were it to be its *only* Entertainment for Eternity? And as for the *Will*, what would a fine Place signify to it, if it were not replenished with such Objects as are suitable to its own *Options*? And indeed there is nothing that can *everlastingly* gratify a rational Mind and Will, but what has in it such an *Infinity* of *Truth* as is everlastingly *Knowable*, and such an *Infinity* of *Goodness* as is everlastingly *Desirable*; or, which is the same Thing, nothing but what hath *Truth* enough in it for the one to be vigorously *contemplating* for ever, and nothing but what hath *Goodness* enough in it for the other to be as vigorously *loving*, *adoring*, and *imitating*, for ever. And such an Infinitude of *Truth* and *Goodness* is no where to be found but in *God*. But *God*, as well as the *Place*, and *Duration* of Heaven, being an Object that is *external* to us, neither is,

nor

nor can be a Happiness to us unless we *act* upon him, and *freely exercise* our Faculties about him ; unless we *Know* him, and *Love* him, &c. So that *that* which *Felicitates* all, is our own *Internal Act* ; 'tis by *this* that we enjoy Heaven, and perceive all the Pleasures of it. It is not by *being in Heaven* that Men are constituted Happy, but by *vigorously exerting* their Faculties upon the Heavenly Objects. For without *this*, to be *in Heaven* or *out of it* would be indifferent to us. The Happiness of Heaven therefore consists in a *State of Heavenly Action* ; in being so *attempered* and *connaturalized* to the Objects of Heaven, as to be always *acting upon*, and *cheerfully employing* our Faculties about them. For as there is no Pleasure in acting *coldly* upon *suitable* Objects, so there is Pain and Trouble in acting *vigorously* upon *unsuitable* ones. And therefore to make *Heaven* itself a *Happiness* to us, it is necessary not only that we should act vigorously upon the Objects of it, but that we should *so* act from a *suitableness* of Temper to them. That we should contemplate God, submit to his Will, adore and imitate his Perfections from a *God-like Temper* and *Disposition*. For otherwise these acts will be *Penances* instead of *Pleasures* to us ; and the more *intensely* we exert them, the more *painful* they will be. And if we were in Heaven, all that Heavenly Exercise in which the Happiness of it consists, would be but a *Torment* and *Vexation* to us unless we had a *Heavenly Temper*. For as the Parts of *Matter* can never *rest*, but do move about in a perpetual *Whirl-pool*, till they *hit* into a place or *Interstice* that is of the same *Form* and *Figure* with them : so there is nothing can *rest* in Heaven but

what is *Heavenly*. All that is otherwise *rebounds* and *flies off* of its own accord, and can never *acquiesce* there, till it is of the same Form, and Temper, and Disposition with it. From hence therefore it is evident, that the Happiness of a Man in *Heaven* consists not so much in the *outward* Glory of the Place, as in the *inward* State of his own Mind, which from a *suitableness* of Temper to the Heavenly Objects doth always *freely* employ and exercise its Faculties about them.

II. That the *Heavenly State* is nothing else but the *Perfection* of all *Heavenly Virtue*. For it hath been already proved, that Heaven consists in a clear and intimate *Knowledge*, and a free and uncontested *Choice* of God, and of those Blessed Beings that resemble him; and *these two* comprehend *all* Heavenly Virtue. So that the difference between the State of *Grace* and *Glory* is not in *Kind* but in *degree*. For *Grace* is the *Seed* of *Glory*, and *Glory* is the *Maturity* of *Grace*. It is *Knowledge* exalted above all *Error* and *Prejudice*, above all *Difficulty* or *Obscurity* of Apprehension; it is *Love* strained from all *repugnancies* of *Flesh* and *Spirit*, and refined into a pure *Celestial Flame*; it is *Obedience* to, and *Imitation* of God, perfectly separated from all *Sinful Defects*, and freed from the *clog* of *counter-striving* Principles; it is *Adoration* of and *Dependency* upon him, without the least degree of *Indisposition* or *Despondency*; in a Word, it is a *free* and *untrouled* Motion of all the Heavenly Virtues together, in which they are every one most *vigorously* exerted, without the least *Check* or *Impediment*. This therefore being the *State of Heaven*, as is evident from what hath been discoursed,

coursed, it hence follows, that the main difference between *Virtue* and *Heaven* is only *Gradual*; that *Virtue* is the *beginning* of *Heaven*, and *Heaven* is the *Perfection* of *Virtue*. And if so, then as the *lowest* Degree of true *Virtue* is a *step* *Heaven-wards*, so every *farther* Degree is a *nearer approach* towards the *Heavenly State*. So that as we *grow* in *Grace*, and proceed from *one* Degree of *Virtue* to *another*, we draw *nearer* and *nearer* to that blessed Condition in which we shall be all *pure Virtue* without any *sinful Alloy* or *Intermixture*. And this is the true *State* and *Condition* of *Heaven*.

C H A P. II.

Concerning the Means by which this great End of the Christian Life is to be attained.

IT is to be considered that the great Design of Christianity being to *advance* our Natures to such a sublime Degree of Purity and Perfection as is requisite to capacitate us for the Enjoyment of a *Heavenly Bliss*: it was necessitated, in order hereunto, to strain our Duty to a greater *height* than any *preceding* Law had done before it. For the *End* of all God's *Laws* is the *Happiness* of his *Subjects*; and therefore that they may be effectual *Means* to promote this *End*, it is necessary that the *Duties* they enjoin should be such as the *Nature* of our *Happiness* requires. Now in the first State

of our Nature, which was that of *Innocence*; we seem to have been designed only for a *Terrestrial Paradise*, that is, to enjoy the pleasures of a pure mind inhabiting a sensitive and animal body, and therefore had we stood (which God foresaw we should not, and therefore designed us for a more raised and heavenly condition) our Happiness would have been what it is now in this world, though in a higher degree, *viz.* a compound of Spiritual and Bodily Delights, to be enjoyed in a State of earthly Immortality, which would have been of a much inferior Nature to that pure State of Spiritual Happiness whereunto we are now designed and directed: And to serve this former End in the possession of which Man was placed in the State of *Innocence*, God gave him the *Law of Nature*, which seems to have been nothing else but only *Right Reason* dictating to us what is necessary to be done in order to this our *Earthly Happiness*. And accordingly the Duties of this Law were of a much *lower* strain than the Duties of Christianity; they being intended for the Means and Instruments of a much *lower* Happiness. For in this our *Earthly* and *Animal* State, right Reason could require nothing of us but what was subservient to our *Earthly* and *Animal* Felicity; which was only a mixture of bodily and mental, sensitive and rational Pleasure, and nothing could be *good* for us but what tended thereunto, nothing *evil* but what did obstruct and oppose it. But now that our Happiness is placed in *another* World, and in such *vastly different* Enjoyments from those of a terrestrial Paradise, we must proceed upon *other* Principles. For now every

every Action is Good or Bad, Wise or Foolish, as it *serves* or *hinders* our Happiness in the World to come. And therefore it is highly reasonable that now we should live at a *different rate*, than what we were obliged to in that *Animal State* wherein we were first Created; that we should submit our *earthly* to our *heavenly* Interest, and renounce the Joys and Pleasures of *this* Life, whenever they stand in Competition with the *spiritual* Felicities of the *Life to come*. Now we are no longer to look upon this World as our *Native Country*, but as a *Foreign Land*; and so we are to reckon ourselves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* upon Earth; and accordingly to use the Conveniencies of this Life as *Strangers* do their *Inns*, not to abide or take up our Habitation in them, but only to bait and away, and refresh ourselves that so we may be the better enabled to perform our Journey to the Eternal World. For the Scene of our *Happiness* being shifted from an Earthly Immortality, to an Heavenly; and consequently the Happiness itself being now much more *sublime*, and *pure*, and *spiritual* than it would have been, had it continued Earthly; it is necessary that our Nature should be *exalted* with it, and that we should be *raised* as high above the *Condition* of mere Earthly Creatures, as *that* is above the *Rank* and *Quality* of an Earthly Happiness; otherwise it will be impossible for us to relish and enjoy it.

Now every Agent hath need of *more* or *fewer* Means proportionably as he is *farther off*, or *nearer* to the End he drives at. As for instance, the Husbandman that hath a *fat* and *fruitful* Soil to sow his Seed in, is *nearer* to the attaining of a good

Harvest, than he that hath a *barren* or *stony* Ground to work upon; and therefore hath much *less* to do. For whereas the latter, before he can plow and sow, must manure his Ground and gather out the Stones of it; the former needs only plow up the fertile Earth, and cast his Seed into it. Or to come closer to the Case in hand; a Man that is meerly *ignorant* is in a much *nearer* Capacity of true Knowledge, than he whose Mind is altogether prejudiced with *erroneous* Principles; and therefore needs much *fewer* Helps and Means to attain it. For *his* Mind being perfectly disengaged, is like a fair Paper, on which as there is nothing *writ*, so there is nothing to be *blotted out*; so that all that he hath to do, is to enquire after and receive the Truth when it is fairly proposed to him. But as for the *Prejudiced* Man, he hath a great deal to unlearn, before he can be capable of Learning; a great many *false* Principles to be expunged, before ever the *true* Notions of Things can be imprinted on his Understanding.

If therefore we would take a true Account of all those *Means* that are necessary to our attaining of Heaven, we must consider what a *vast Distance* we are from it in this corrupt and degenerate State of our Nature. If we were in a State of *Indifference* between Virtue and Vice, we should be much *nearer* Heaven than we are; for then, as we should be without those *heavenly Virtues* in the free Exercise whereof the State of Heaven consists; so we should be without all that *Repugnance* and *Aversion* to them which renders them so difficultly attainable; and our Nature being already in an *Equilibrium* would by the least *Over-weight* of Motive be presently inclined to Virtue and Goodness. But
 alas !

alas ! in this *corrupt* State whereinto we are sunk, our Nature runs Evil-wards with a very strong and prevailing *Bias*; and is not only *void* of Virtue, but *averse* to it. And this sets us at a far greater Distance from the blessed *End* of our Religion, than otherwise we should be. For every Degree of vicious Inclination that is in us, is a *Remove* from Heaven, a *Descent* from that Perfection of Virtue wherein the Heavenly Blessedness consists. And if so, how *remote* from Heaven are the Generality of Men in the Beginning of their Progress thither; when to their natural *Corruption* they have super-added by their sinful Courses so many inordinate *Inclinations* and inveterate sinful *Habits*; when by a long Series of wicked Actions, they have raised and blown up their Concupiscence into such raging *Flames* of Lust as *generally* they do ! And being thus far gone back from our *End*, there are sundry *Means*, which otherwise would have been perfectly *needless* and *superfluous*, that are now become absolutely *necessary* thereunto. For had we begun our Progress towards Heaven from a State of *Indifferency* between Virtue and Vice, we had had no more to do but to practise those several Virtues of Religion, of which the Heavenly Life and State consists; to *love* and to *contemplate*, to *adore*, and to *obey* God, and behave ourselves *justly* and *charitably* towards one another; all which would have been so *easy*, that we should have had no Occasion of any *Instrumental Duties* to facilitate them to us. Whereas now starting Heaven-wards, as we generally do, from a most *corrupt* and *degenerate* State, there are sundry *other Means* which we must use as *Instruments* that are necessary to
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our acquiring and persevering in the Virtues of the Heavenly Life ; to our conquering the Difficulties and killing the vicious Averſations of our Natures againſt them: All which would have been *needleſs*, at leaſt in a great Meaſure, had not our Nature been ſo *depraved* and *corrupt* as it is.

So that as the caſe *now* ſtands with us, there are *Two* Sorts of Means that are neceſſary to our obtaining of Heaven ; the firſt is the Practice of thoſe *Heavenly Virtues*, in the Perfection whereof conſiſts the State of Heaven ; the ſecond is the Practice of certain *Instrumental Duties*, which are neceſſary to our acquiring thoſe Heavenly Virtues, and overcoming the Difficulties of them. The firſt Sort of theſe are the *proximate* Means, thoſe which directly and immediately reſpect the Great and Ultimate End : The ſecond the more *remote* Means, which immediately reſpect thoſe Means that immediately reſpect the *End*. The firſt is like the Art of the *Builder* which immediately reſpects the Houſe ; The ſecond like the Art of the *Smith*, which immediately reſpects the *Means* and *Inſtruments* of Building.

I. One ſort of Means neceſſary to the obtaining of Heaven, and that which more *directly* and *immediately* reſpects it, is the *Practice* of thoſe *Virtues* in the Perfection whereof the heavenly Life conſiſts. For we find by Experience that all heavenly Virtues are to be acquired and perfected only by *Practice* ; That as all *bad* Diſpoſitions are acquired and improved into Habits by *bad* Practices and Customs, ſo are all the contrary *virtuous* ones by the *contrary* Practices. For *Religion* proceeds in the Methods of *Nature*, and carries us on
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from the *Acts* to the *Dispositions*, and from the *Dispositions* to the *Habits* of Virtue. And by the same Method the *Divine Grace* which accompanies Religion, does ordinarily work its Effects upon the spirits of men, not by an *instantaneous Infusion* of virtuous Habits into the Will, but by persuading them to the *Practice* of those *Virtues* that are contrary to their *vicious Habits*, and to persist in the practice of them till they have mortified *those* Habits, and thoroughly habituated and inured themselves to *these*. So that the Grace of God is like a *Graft*, which though it is put into a *Stock* which is quite of *another* kind, doth yet make use of the Faculties and Juices of the Stock, and so by co-operating with them, converts it by degrees into its *own* Nature. And this is exactly agreeable to the common experience of men, who in the beginning of their Reformation are so far from acting virtuously from *Habit* and *Inclination*, that it goes against the very *Grain* of their Nature. and they would much rather return to their vicious courses, if they were not chased and pursued by the *Terrors* of an *awakened Conscience*; and when afterwards they come to act upon a more *ingenuous* Principle, yet still they find in themselves a great *Averseness* and *Reluctancy* to it, and it is a great while usually ere they arrive to a *Habit* or *Facility* of acting *virtuously*. But then by *perseverance* in the practice of Virtue they are more and more *inclined* and *disposed* to it, and so by degrees it becomes *easy* and *natural* to them. If therefore we would ever arrive to that Perfection of Virtue which the Heavenly State implies, it must be by the *Practice* of Virtue, by a continual *training* and *exercising*

exercising ourselves in all the parts of the Heavenly Life, which by degrees will *wear off* the *Difficulty* of it, and *adapt* and *familiarize* our Nature to it. Ἄ γὰρ δεῖ μαθητῶντας ποιεῖν, ταῦτα ποιεῖντες μαθαίνομεν : *Those things which they that learn ought to do, they learn by doing them.* Thus we learn Devotion by Prayer, Submission to God by denying ourselves, Charity by giving Alms, and Meekness by Forgiving Injuries. And we may as reasonably expect to commence *learned* without *Study*, as *virtuous* without the *Practise* of Virtue. Since therefore the Formal Happiness of our reasonable Natures consists in the Perfection of all the Heavenly virtues, and it is by these alone that we can relish and enjoy the blissful Objects of Heaven ; it hence follows, that the *Practise* of those virtues is the most *direct* and *immediate* Means to obtain the *Blessed End* of our Religion. But then,

II. Another sort of Means necessary to our obtaining of Heaven consists of certain *Instrumental Duties* by which we are to *acquire*, *improve*, and *perfect* these *Heavenly Virtues*. What these *Means* are will be hereafter largely shewn : All that I shall say of them at present is, That they are such as are no farther good and useful, than as they are the *Means* of Heavenly Virtue, and do tend towards the *acquiring*, *improving*, and *perfecting* it. For the whole Duty of Man may be distributed into these *Two Generals*, viz. The Religion of the *End*, and the Religion of the *Means*. The Religion of the *End*, contains all that *Heavenly Virtue* wherein the *Perfection* and *Happiness* of Human Nature consists ; and this the *Apostle* distributes into three particulars, viz. *Soberiety*, *Righteousness*,

ousness, and Godliness. The Religion of the *Means* comprehends all that *Duty* which does either *naturally*, or by *Institution*, respect and drive at this Religion of the End; and that all other Duty, that is not itself a natural Branch and Part of it, doth respect and drive at it, the Apostle *assures* us, when he tells us that the *Gospel* or *Grace of God*, was revealed from Heaven for this very purpose, to teach us to *deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously and godly in this present world.* And if we do not use the Religion of the *Means* to this purpose, it is altogether *useless* and *insignificant.* For the purpose of all *Religious Duties* is either,

1. To *reconcile* men to God, and God to them, or,

2. To *perfect* the Human Nature; or,

3. To *intitle* men to Heaven: or,

4. To *qualify* and *dispose* them for the Heavenly Life. To neither of which the Religion of the *Means* is any farther useful than as it produces and promotes in us those *Heavenly Virtues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End.* For,

I. It is no further useful towards the *reconciling* us to God, and God to us. For there can be no hearty *Reconciliation* between adverse parties without there be a mutual *Likeness*, and *Agreement* of Natures. Now the *Carnal Mind*, (which includes all that is repugnant to the *Heavenly Virtues*) the *Apostle* tells us, is *Enmity against God*, *Rom. vii. 17.* that is, hath a natural *Antipathy* to the *Purity* and *Goodness* of the Divine Nature. And this *Antipathy* the same *Apostle* tells us, is founded in our *wicked works*, *Coloss. i. 21.* So that
though

though we should practise never so diligently all that is contained in the Religion of the *Means*, though we should *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive Sacraments*, &c. with never so much Zeal and Constancy, yet all this will be insignificant, as to the *reconciling* our Natures to God, unless it destroy in us that *Carnal Mind* and those *wicked works* which render us so averse to his *Goodness*. And though God bears a *heartly good Will* to all that are capable of *Good*, and *embraces* his whole Creation with the out-stretched Arms of his *Benevolence*, yet he cannot be supposed to be *pleased* with, or *delighted* in any but such as *resemble* him in those amiable Graces of *Purity* and *Goodness* for which he loves *himself*. For he loves not *Himself* meerly because he is *Himself* (which would be a *blind Instinct*, rather than a *Reasonable Love*) but because he is *Good*, and he loves himself above all *other* things, because he knows himself to be the *highest* and most *Perfect* Good; and consequently he loves all other things proportionably as they *approach* and *resemble* him in *Goodness*. And indeed if he loved *us* for any other reason besides that for which he loves *himself*; he would not have *infinite reason* to love *himself*; because he would not have *that Reason* to love *himself* for which he loves and takes delight in *us*. Since therefore there is nothing but our *resemblance* of God can *reconcile* him to us, and since our *Resemblance* of him consists in *Virtue* and true *Goodness*, it hence follows that all the Religion of the *Means* is insignificant to our *Reconciliation* with God, if it doth not render us truly *virtuous*. So that till this is effected, there is so vast a *Gulf*

between God and us, that neither can *We* go to *him*, nor *he* come to us; and unless he alter his Nature by becoming *impure* as we are *impure*, or we alter ours by becoming *pure* as he is *pure*, there will be so immense a *Distance* between him and us, as that it is impossible we should ever *meet* and *agree*. So that what the *Prophet* saith of *Sacrifice* may be truly affirmed of all Religion of the *Means*, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil?* Will he be reconciled upon our bare *believing*, *praying*, or *receiving Sacraments*, &c. No, no; *he hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micah vi. 7, 8.

II. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther Use as to the *perfecting* our Natures, than as it is instrumental to produce and promote in us those *Heavenly Virtues* which are implied in the Religion of the *End*. For doubtless to be a perfect Man is to live up to the highest Principle of Human Nature, which is *Reason*; and till we are once released from the Slavery of *Sense* and *Passion*, and all our Powers of Action are so subdued to this *superior* Principle as to be wholly *regulated* by it, and we *chuse* and *refuse*, and *love* and *hate*, and *hope* and *fear*, and *desire* and *delight*, according as right Reason directs, we are in a *maimed* and *imperfect* Condition. Now what else is *Virtue* but a Habit of Living according to the *Laws* of *Reason*, or of demeaning ourselves towards God, ourselves, and all the World, as best becomes *Rational Beings* placed in our Condition and Circumstances? And till we are in some Measure arrived

to this, our Nature is so far from being *perfect*, that it is the most *wretched* and *confused* Thing in the whole World; A mere undistinguished *Chaos*, where *Frigida cum Calidis*, Sense and Reason, Brute and Man, are shuffled together without any Order, like a confounded Heap of Ruins. And therefore as for this Religion of the *Means*, it will be altogether insignificant to the *Perfection* of our Natures, unless by the Practice of it we do acquire a *Habit* of acting according to the *Law* of our *Reason*, which *Habit* includes all *Heavenly Virtue*. For constantly to *know* and *do* what is best and most reasonable, is the very Crown and Perfection of every *reasonable Nature*; and therefore so far as our *Faith* and *Consideration*, our *Sorrow* for *Sin* and the other *Instrumentals* of Religion, promote this *Heavenly Habit* in us, so far are they *perfective* of our Nature, and no *farther*.

III. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther use to us as to the *Entitling* us to Heaven, than as it is productive of those *Heavenly Virtues* which the Religion of the *End* implies. For our *Title* to Heaven depending wholly upon God's *Promise*, must immediately result from our Performance of those *Conditions* upon which he hath *promised it*; which till we have done, we can have no more *Claim* or *Title* to it than if he had never *promised it* at all. But the sole Condition upon which he hath *promised it*, is universal Righteousness and Goodness: for so, *without Holiness*, we are assured that *no Man shall see God*; and *Matt. v.* our *Saviour* intails all the Beatitudes of Heaven upon those *Heavenly Virtues* of *Purity of Heart*, *Benignity of Temper*, &c. So also *Rom. ii. 7.* the

Promise of Eternal Life is limited to our *Patient Continuance in well-doing*. And that we may know beforehand what to trust to, our *Saviour* plainly tells us, that *not every one that cries, Lord, Lord*, that makes solemn *Prayers* and *Addresses* to me, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven; and this is the Will of God, saith the Apostle, even our *Sanctification*; that is, our being purged from all Impurities of Flesh and Spirit, and inspired with all Heavenly Virtues. And the Apostle expressly enumerates those Virtues upon which our Entrance into Eternal Life is promised, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness Brotherly Kindness, and to Brotherly Kindness Charity*; for if these things be in you, and abound, saith he, they make you that you shall neither be barren or unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, that you shall receive the proper Fruit of that Knowledge which is Eternal Life: for thus v. 11. he goes on, *For so, or upon this Condition, an Entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. So that unless our Faith purifies our Hearts, and works by Love; unless our Sorrow for Sin works in us Repentance, or a Change of Mind; unless our Prayers raise in us Divine and Heavenly Affections, that is, unless we practise the Duties of the Religion of the Means as thereby to acquire the Virtues of the Religion of the End, it will be all as insignificant to our Title to Heaven, as the most indifferent Actions in the World.

IV. This Religion of the *Means* is of no farther Use to the *disposing* and *qualifying* us for Heaven, than as it is an effectual Means of the Religion of the *End*. Which is a perfectly distinct Consideration from the former, for it would be no Advantage to us to have a *right* to Heaven, unless we were antecedently *qualified* and *disposed* for it. Because Pleasure, which is a relative Thing, implies a *Correspondence* and *Agreement* between the *Object* and the *Faculty* that tastes and enjoys it. But in the *Temper* of every wicked Mind there is a strong *Antipathy* to the Pleasures of Heaven ; which being all *chaste*, and *pure*, and *spiritual*, can never agree with the vitiated Palate of a *base* and *degenerate* Soul. For what Concord can there be between a *spiteful* and *devilish* Spirit and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness*? between a *sensual* and *carnalized* one, that understands no other Pleasures but only those of the *Flesh*, and those *Pure* and *Virgin* Spirits that neither *eat* nor *drink*, but live for ever upon *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation*? Certainly till our Mind is *contempered* to the Heavenly State, and we are of the same *Disposition* with God, and Angels, and Saints, there is no Pleasure in Heaven that can be agreeable to us. For, as for the *main*, we shall be of the same *Temper* and *Disposition* when we come into the *other* World, as we are when we leave *this* ; it being unimaginable how a *Total Change* should be wrought in *us* merely by passing out of *one* World into *another*. And therefore as in *this* World it is *Likeness* that does *congregate* and *associate* Beings together ; so doubtless it is in the *other* too. So that if we carry with us *thither* our *wicked* and *devilish*

devilish dispositions (as we shall doubtless do, unless we *subdue* and *mortify* them here) there will be no Company fit for us to associate with, but only the *devilish* and *damned* Ghosts of wicked Men, with whom our wretched Spirits being already *joined*, by a likeness of Nature, will mingle themselves, as soon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither should they flock, but to the Birds of their own Feather? with whom should they associate, but with those *malignant* Spirits to whom they are already joined by a Community of Nature? So that supposing that when they land in Eternity, it were left to their own Liberty to go to *Heaven* or *Hell*, into the Society of the *Blessed* or the *Damned*; it is plain that Heaven would be no place for them, that the Air of that *bright* Region of *eternal Day*, would never agree with their *black* and *hellish* Natures. For, alas! what should they do among those *blessed Beings* that inhabit it, to whose God-like Natures, Divine Contemplations, and Heavenly Employments, they have so great a *Repugnancy* and *Aversion*? So that besides the having a *Right* to Heaven, it is necessary to our enjoying it that we should be antecedently *disposed* and *qualified* for it. And it being thus, God hath been graciously pleased to make those very Virtues the *Conditions* of our *Right* to Heaven which are the proper *Dispositions* and *Qualifications* of our Spirits for it; that so with one and the same Labour we might *entitle* ourselves to, and *qualify* ourselves to enjoy it.

Now (as we shewed you before) the *Condition* of our *Right* to Heaven, is our *practising* those

those Heavenly Virtues which are implied in the Religion of the *End*; and as the Religion of the *Means* no further *entitles* us to Heaven than as it produces and promotes in us those Heavenly Virtues, so it no further *qualifies* us for it. For when the Soul goes into Eternity, it leaves the Religion of the *Means* behind it, and carries nothing with it but only those Heavenly *Virtues* and *Dispositions* which it here acquired by those *Means*. For as for *Faith* and *Consideration*, *Hearing* of God's Word, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, &c. they are all but Scaffolds to that Heavenly building of inward *Purity* and *Goodness*; and when this is once finished for Eternity, then must those Scaffolds all go down, as things of no further Use or Necessity. But as for the *Graces* of the *Mind*, they are to stand for ever, to be the Receptacles and Habitations of all Heavenly Pleasure. And hence the Apostle tells us, that of those three Christian Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, *Charity* (which in the largest Sense of it comprehends *all* Heavenly Virtue) is the greatest; because the two former, being but *Means* of *Charity*, shall cease in Heaven, and be swallowed up for ever in *Vision* and *Enjoyment*; but *Charity*, saith he, *never faileth*, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

By all which it is apparent that the Religion of the *Means* is no further useful to us, than as it is apt to produce and promote in us those Heavenly Virtues, the practice of which is the most *direct* and *immediate* Means to the ultimate *End* of a Christian. Wherefore as a Man may *knock* and *file*, and yet be no *Mechanick*, though the *Hammer* and *File* with which he does it are very useful Tools

Tools to the making of any curious *Machine*; so a Man may *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive Sacraments*, &c. and yet be a very Bungler in the blessed Trade of a Heavenly Life. For though it is true, these are excellent *Means* of Heavenly Living, yet as the Art of the *Mechanick* consists not in *using* his Tools, but in using them in *such a manner*, as is necessary to the perfecting and accomplishing his Work; so the Art of one that pretends to the Heavenly Life, consists not barely in *praying* and *hearing*, &c. but in using these *Means* with that Religious *Skill* and *Artifice* which is necessary to render them effectually subservient to the *Ends* of *Piety* and *Virtue*.

And thus I have given a general Account of the *Means* which are necessary to our obtaining of Heaven, and which, as I have shewed, are either such as tend more *directly* and *immediately* to it, or such as more *remotely* respect it. The first is the Practice of those *Heavenly Virtues* in the Perfection whereof the Happiness of Heaven consists; the second is the practising of those *Duties*, which are necessary to our acquiring and perfecting those *Heavenly Virtues*. And of these two Parts consists the whole *Christian Life*; which takes in not only all those *Virtues* that are to be practised by us in Heaven, but also all those *Duties*, by which we are to overcome the Difficulty of those *Virtues*, and to acquire and perfect them. The first of these, for Distinction sake, we will call the *Heavenly Part* of the *Christian Life*, it being that part of it which we shall lead in *Heaven*, after we have learnt it here upon *Earth*; The second I shall call the *Warfaring* or *Militant Part* of the *Christian*

Life, which is peculiar to our *Earthly State*, wherein we are to contend and strive with the manifold Difficulties which attend us in the Exercise of those *Heavenly Virtues*. Both which, I conceive, are implied in those words of the Apostle, *Phil. i. 27. Only let your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel*; where the Greek word *πολιτεύεσθε*, which we render, *Let your Conversation be*, strictly signifies, *behaving ourselves as Citizens*; or which, if we may have leave to coin a Word, may be fitly rendered, *Citizen it as becomes the Gospel*. For the Word implies that those of whom he speaks, were *Denizens* of some *free City*; for so the Word *πολίτευμα*, which *Phil. iii. 20.* is rendered *Conversation*, strictly denotes a *Citizenship*, from *πολίται*, *Citizens*; and is of the same import with *πολίτεια*; which *Acts xxii. 28.* is translated a *Freedom*, *i. e.* of the City of *Rome*; which denotes the State and Condition of those, who, though they dwelt out of that City, and sometimes remote from it, had yet the *Jus Civitatis Romanæ*, the *Privilege* of it belonging to them. For thus *Cicero* describes it, *Omnibus Municipibus duas esse Patrias, unam Naturæ, alteram Juris, Catonis Exemplo qui Tusculi natus, in Populi Romani Societatem susceptus est: i. e.* “ All such as are made free of the City have
 “ two Countries, one of Nature, the other of
 “ Law; as *Cato*, for instance, who was born at
 “ *Tusculum*, and afterwards admitted a Citizen
 “ of *Rome*. Which exactly agrees with the Nature of this Heavenly *πολίτευμα*, or *Citizenship*, which the *Apostle* here attributes to Christians, who though they belong at present to another Country, and live a great way off from the
 Heavenly

Heavenly City, have as yet no *Domicilium in Urbe*, no actual Possession of any of its blessed Mansions; are notwithstanding *Free Denizens* of it, and have by Covenant a Right to all those blessed *Privileges* which its Inhabitants do actually enjoy. From whence it is evident, that the *πολιτεύεσθε*, in that Text, refers to their being *Citizens* of Heaven, and as *such*, it earnestly exhorts them to behave themselves; to live as those who being now in a remote Country are yet *συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων*, as the *Apostle* expresses it, *Eph. ii. 19. i. e. Fellow-Citizens with the Saints above; that are connaturalized with them into that Heavenly Commonwealth.* And being thus understood, the *Apostle's Advice* will comprehend it in *both* those kinds of *Means* which I have before described. For, to live as *Citizens* of Heaven, is, First, to live like those who are the *Inhabitants* of Heaven, to imitate their blessed *Manners* and *Behaviour*, in doing the Will of God upon *Earth*, as it is done by them in *Heaven*; and this takes in the *Practice* of all those *Heavenly Virtues* of which the Religion of the *End* consists. Secondly, to live like those that have a *πολίτευμα* or *Citizenship* in Heaven, that are entitled by Covenant to the *Privileges* and *Immunities* of it, but are as yet to win its *Possession* by a continual *Warfare* and *Contention* with those manifold Difficulties and *Oppositions* which lie in our Way to it; and this takes in the *Practice* of all those *Duties* in which the Religion of the *Means* consists. To live like *Christians* therefore, or as becomes the *Gospel*, is to live in the continual Use of both Kinds of the *Means* of Happiness. So that the *Christian Conversation* consisting of these

Two, is the only *full* and *Adequate* Means by which *Heaven* can be obtained.

But that I may make this more fully appear, I shall consider these two Parts of it *distinctly*, and endeavour to shew how effectually each of them doth contribute in its Kind, to our obtaining the Happiness of Heaven. And first, I shall begin with the *Proximate* Means, *viz.* The *Practice* of all those *Heavenly Virtues*, which are implied in the Religion of the *End*, and do make the *Heavenly Part* of the CHRISTIAN LIFE.

C H A P. III.

Concerning the Heavenly Part of the Christian Life, which is the Proximate Means of obtaining Heaven; shewing what Virtues it consists of, and how much every Virtue contributes to the Happiness of Heaven.

VIRTUE in the general, consists in a *suitable Behaviour* to the *State* and *Capacities* in which we are placed; Now *Man*, who is the Subject of that *Virtue* we are here discoursing of, is to be considered under a threefold *Capacity*. The

First, Is of a *Rational Animal*; the

Second, Of a *Rational Animal* related to *God*;
the

Third,

Third, of a Rational Animal related to all *other Creatures*.

And these are the only Capacities of Virtue that are in Human Nature : So that all the Virtues we are obliged to, and capable of, consist in behaving ourselves suitably to the State and Condition of *Rational Animals*, that are related to *God* and their *Fellow Creatures*.

By which three Capacities of our Nature, the Virtue or *Suitableness* of *Behaviour* which we stand obliged to, is distinguished into three Kinds, *viz.*

The *Human*,
The *Divine*, and
The *Social*.

Human Virtue consists in behaving ourselves suitably to the State and Capacity of mere *Rational Animals* :

Divine Virtue consists in behaving ourselves suitably to the Condition of rational Animals related to *God* :

Social Virtue consists in behaving ourselves suitably to the Capacity of rational Animals related to their *Fellow Creatures*, but especially to *Rational Creatures* that are of the same Class and Society with us.

That I may therefore proceed more distinctly in this Argument, I shall endeavour to shew what those *Virtues* of the *Christian Life* are, which are proper to a Man in each of these *Capacities* ; and how much each of those *Virtues* contributes to the *Happiness* of *Heaven*.

S E C T.

S E C T. I.

Concerning those Human Virtues which belong to a Man as he is a reasonable Animal, shewing that they are all included in the Heavenly Part of the Christian Life, and that the Practice of them effectually conduces to our future Happiness.

First we will consider Man in the Capacity of a mere *Rational Animal*, that is compounded of contrary Principles, viz. *Spirit* and *Matter*, or a *Rational Soul* and *Human Body*; by which Composition he is, as it were, the Buckle of both Worlds, in whom the *Spiritual* and *Material* World are clasped and united together; and partaking, as he does, of both Extreame, of *Spirit* and of *Matter*, of *Angel* and *Brute*, there arise within him from those contrary Natures contrary Propensions, viz. *Rational* and *Sensual*, or *Angelical* and *Brutish*; and in the due Subordination of these his *Sensual* to his *Rational* Propensions consists all Human Virtue.

For his *Reason* being the noblest Principle of his Nature, must be supposed to be implanted in him by God to *rule* and *govern* him, to be an *Eye* to his blind and brutish Affections, to *correct* the Errors of his Imagination, to *bound* the Extravagancies of his Appetites; and *regulate* the whole Course of his Actions; so as that he may do nothing that is destructive or injurious to this excellent Frame and Structure of his Nature. But now in this compounded Nature of a Man, there are his *Concupiscible* and *Irascible Affections*: with the
first

first of which he desires and pursues his *Pleasures*; and with the second, he shuns and avoids his *Dangers*; and there are also *Bodily Appetites*, such as Hunger, Thirst, and carnal Concupiscence, and together with these a *Self-Esteem* and *Valuation*; all which are the natural Subjects of his Reason, and indeed the only Subjects upon which it is to exercise its Dominion So that in the well and ill Government of *these*, consists all *Human Virtue* and *Vice*. To the perfect well governing therefore of a Man's self, there are five things indispensably necessary.

1. That he shall impartially consult his *Reason* what is absolutely best for him, and by what means it is best attainable, and then *constantly* pursue what it proposes and directs him to. For so far as he is wanting in this, he casts off the Government of his *Reason*.

2. That he should proportion his *Concupiscible* Affections to the just value which his *Reason* sets upon those things which he *affects*: For every Degree of Affection which exceeds the merit of things, is *irrational*, and consequently injurious to our *Rational Nature*.

3. That he should not suffer his *Irrascible* Affections to exceed those Evils and Dangers which he would *avoid*: For if he doth, *they* will prove greater Evils to him than *those* Evils or Dangers are which raise and provoke them.

4. That he should not indulge his *Bodily Appetites* to the Hurt and Prejudice of his *Rational Nature*: For if he does, he will violate the *nobler*, for the sake of the *viler* part of himself. And

5. That

5. That upon the whole, he should maintain a *modest Opinion* of himself; and not think better of his own *Conduct* and *Management* of himself than it deserves: For by so doing, he will be apt to over-look his own *Misgovernments*, and so incapacitate himself for any farther *Improvements*. And in these five Particulars consist all that Virtue which belongs to a Man, considered merely in the Capacity of a *Rational Animal*.

The First is the Virtue of *Prudence*,

The Second is the Virtue of *Moderation*,

The Third is the Virtue of *Fortitude*,

The Fourth is the Virtue of *Temperance*,

The Fifth is the Virtue of *Humility*.

All which, as I shall shew, are essential Parts of the *Christian Life*, and such as do effectually contribute to our *Heavenly Happiness*.

I. *Prudence*. And this is the *Root* and *Ground-Work* of all other Virtues; it is this that gives *Law* and *Scope* to all our Motions, that proposes the *Ends*, and prescribes the *Measures* of our Actions. For *Prudence* consists in being guided and directed by *Right Reason*, as it proposes to us the worthiest *Ends*, and directs us to the fittest and most effectual *Means* of obtaining them. So that to live *prudently*, is to live in the constant *Exercise* of our *Reason*, and to be continually pursuing such *Ends* as *Right Reason* proposes, by such *Means* as *Right Reason* directs us to, which is the proper Business of all the Virtues of Religion. And hence *Religion* in the Scripture is frequently called by the name of *Wisdom* or *Prudence*; *the Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom*, saith *Job*, and to depart

depart from Evil, that is Understanding, Job xxviii. 28. And, the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom, saith David, Psal. cxi. 10. where the Fear of the Lord comprehends all the *Acts* of Religion which are therefore wise and prudent, because they are the fittest Means to those worthiest Ends which Right Reason proposes. So that to exercise our Reason in the Search and Discovery of what is absolutely best for us, and to follow our Reason in the Pursuit and Acquest of what it discovers to be so, is that Virtue of Prudence whereunto we stand obliged as we are Rational Animals.

For our Reason being the noblest Principle of our Nature, That by which we are raised above the Level of Brutes, yea, by which we are allied to Angels, and do border upon God himself, ought upon that account to be submitted to, as the supreme Regent and Directress of all our other Powers, and to be looked upon as the Rule of our Will and the Guide of all our Animal Motions. And when to gratify our sensual Appetites, or unreasonable Passions we either neglect those Ends which our Reason proposes to us, or pursue them by such Means as our Reason disallows of, we reverse the very order of our Natures, and tread Antipodes to ourselves; and while we do so, it is impossible we should be happy, either here or hereafter. For every thing you see, is diseased while it is in an unnatural State and Condition, while its Parts are displaced, or put into Disorder, or distorted into an unnatural Figure. And so it is with a Man, who while he preserves his Faculties in their natural Station and Subordination to each other, while

while he keeps his *Affections* and *Appetites* in subjection to his *Will* and his *Will* to his *Reason*, he is *calm* and *quiet*, and enjoys within himself perpetual *Ease* and *Tranquillity*; But when once he *breaks* this order, and suffers his passions or his *Appetites* to *usurp* the Place of his *Reason*; to *impose* contrary *Ends* to it, or *prescribe* contrary *Means*; his *Faculties*, like *disjointed* Members, are in perpetual *Anguish* and *Anxiety*. And hence it is that in the Course of a wicked Life, we feel such restless Contentions between our *Spirit* and *Flesh*, between the *Law in our Minds*, and the *Law in our Members*; because our Nature is out of *Tune*, and its *Faculties* are *displaced* and *disordered*, and that sovereign Principle of *Reason* which should *sway* and *govern* us, is *deposed*, and made a *Vassal* to our *Appetites* and *Passions*. For in all our evil Courses we *chuse* and *refuse*, *resolve* and *act*, not as *Reason* directs us, but as *Sense* and *Passion* biases us; and our *Reason* having nothing to do in all this *Brutish Scene* of Action, either sleeps it out, without minding or regarding, or else sits by as an idle Spectator of it, and only *censures* and *condemns* it. And it is this that causes all that *Tumult* and *Contest* that is in our Natures; and till, by the Exercise of *Prudence*, our *Faculties* are reduced, and set in order again, our *Mind* will be like our *Body*, while its *Bones* are out of Joint, continually *restless* and *unquiet*. And therefore to remove this great Indisposition of our Nature to Happiness, *Prudence* is required of us, as one of the principal *Virtues* of the *Heavenly Part* of the *Christian Life*.

For thus our Saviour enjoyns that we should be *wise as Serpents*, as well as *harmless as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. which though it be here prescribed in a *particular* Case only, viz. that of *Persecution*; yet since the Reason of it extends to *all other* Cases, and it is fit we should be Prudent in *all* our Undertakings as well as in *suffering Persecution*, it is upon that Account equivalent to an universal Command. So also Eph. v. 15. *See that ye walk circumspectly, not as Fools, but as wise; i. e.* In the whole Course of your Actions take heed that ye follow the Guidance of your *Reason*, and do not suffer yourselves to be seduced by your blind *Passions* and *Appetites*, which are mere *Ignes Fatui*, or the *Guides of Fools*. And accordingly the Apostle prays for his Christian *Colossians*, *That they might be filled with the Knowledge of God in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding*, Col. i. 9. *i. e.* That they might have such a Knowledge of God's Will as might render them truly *prudent*, and cause them to pursue the best *Ends* by the best *Means*. And though this Virtue seldom occurs in the *New Testament* under its own Name, yet, as in the above-named Places it is expressed by *Wisdom*, so it is elsewhere by *Knowledge*, as particularly, 2 Cor. vi. 6. where he commands the Ministers of the Church to approve themselves such by several Virtues, and particularly by Pureness, *i. e.* *Continence*, and by *Knowledge*, *i. e.* by *Prudence*. For besides that, *Knowledge*, as it signifies an *Understanding of Divine Things*, was not a Virtue in the Apostles, but a *Gift* of God, and so not proper to be enumerated amongst these *Virtues*; there is hardly any Account to be given why the Apostle should

should place *Knowledge* in the midst of so many *Moral Virtues*, if he did not thereby mean the *Virtue* of *Prudence*, which is, as it were, the *Eye* and *Guide* of all the other *Virtues*. So again, 2 Pet. i. 6. where he bids us add to *Faith Virtue*, i. e. Fortitude, or Constancy of Mind ; and to *Virtue Knowledge*, and to *Knowledge Temperance* ; By *Knowledge* it is highly probable he means *Prudence*, because he places it in the midst of those two *Virtues* which border nearest upon *Prudence*.

Now that the Practice of *this Virtue* is a most proper and effectual *Means* of our *Everlasting Happiness*, is evident from hence ; Because the Practice of it is a constant Exercise of *Reason*. For to act *prudently* in Religion is to follow the *best Reason* ; to aim at Heaven, which is the best End, and direct our Actions thither by the *best Rules* ; 'Tis to consult what is *best* for ourselves, and how it may be *most effectually* obtained. In a Word, it is to *intend* the *chiefest Good* above All, and to *level* our Lives and Actions most *directly* towards it. This is *Religious Prudence* in the *General* ; and as for those *Particulars* of it, which we are obliged to exercise in the several *States*, *Relations*, and *Circumstances* wherein we are placed, they all consist in doing what is most *fit* and *reasonable* with respect to that Great and Blessed End.

For by living in the continual Practice of *Religious Prudence*, we shall by Degrees habituate ourselves to a Life of *Reason*, and shake off that drowsy Charm of *Sense* and *Passion* which hangs upon our Minds, and renders our Faculties so *dull* and *inactive* ; and having disused ourselves a while to obey their *blind* and *imperious* Dictates, our Reason

son will re-assume its Throne in us, and direct all our Aims and Endeavours to what is *finest* and most *reasonable*, For we being finite and limited Beings, cannot operate *divers* ways with *equal* Vigour *at once*; and our rational and sensitive Propensions, are made in such a *regular* and *equilibrious* Order, that proportionably as the one does *increase* in Activity, the other always *decays*; and so accordingly as we *abate* in the Strength of our *brutish*, we shall *improve* in the Vigour of our *rational* Faculties. But to act suitably to their Natures being the end of all our *Faculties* and *Powers* of *Action*, the God of Nature, to excite them thereto, has founded all their *Pleasure* in the *vigorous* Exercise of them upon *suitable* Objects. Since therefore our *Reason* is the best and noblest of all *Powers* of *Action*, to be sure the greatest *Pleasure* we are capable of, must spring out of the Exercise of our *Reason*. Wherefore since *Prudence* consists in the *Use* of our *Reason*, the Practice thereof must needs effectually contribute to our *Pleasure* and *Happiness*. For *Use* and *Exercise* will mightily *strengthen* and *improve* our Reason and render it not only more *apprehensive* of what is fit and reasonable; but also more *persuasive* and *prevalent*; and when once it is improved into a *prevailing Principle* of Action, and hath acquired not only *Skill* enough to *prescribe* what is right to us, but also *Power* enough to *persuade* us to comply with its Prescriptions: to *choose* and *refuse*, to *love* and *bate*, to *hope* and *fear*, *desire* and *delight*, and regulate all our Actions by its Laws and Dictates, then we are entring upon our *Heaven* and *Happiness*.

For that which makes us *unhappy* is, that our sinful and unreasonable Affections do so *hamper* and *intangle* us, that we cannot *freely* exercise our Faculties upon such Objects as are most suitable to them; that our Minds and Wills are so *fettered* by our vicious Inclinations, that we cannot exert them upon that which is most worthy to be *known* and *chosen*, without a great deal of *Difficulty* and *Distraction*. But now under the Conduct of our *Reason* our Faculties will by Degrees recover their *Freedom*, and disengage themselves from those vicious *Encumbrances* which do so *clog* and *interrupt* them in their rational Motions. And when this is thoroughly effected, we are in full Possession of the *heavenly State*, which, as I have shewed, consists in the *free* and *vigorous* Exercise of our rational Faculties upon the *best* and *worthiest* Objects. For when once our *Passions* and *Appetites* are perfectly subdued to our *Reason*, all our rational Faculties will be *free*, and every one will move towards its proper Object without any *Lett* or *Hindrance*; our *Understanding* will be swallowed up in a fixt Contemplation of the *sublimest Truth*; our *Wills*, entirely resigned to the Choice and *Embraces* of the *truest Good*; our *Affections*, unalterably devoted to the Love and Fruition of the most *excellent Beauty and Perfection*; and in this consists the happy State of *Heaven*; so that to live *prudently*, or, which is the same, to govern ourselves by our *best Reason*, is both a *necessary* and *effectual* Means of attaining to the *heavenly State*.

II. Another Virtue which appertains to a Man, considered merely as a *rational Animal*, is

Moderation; which consists in proportioning our *concupiscible* Affections to the just Worth and Value of Things; so as neither to spend our Affections *too prodigally* upon Trifles, nor yet to be *oversparing* or *niggardly* of them to real and substantial Goods. But to *love, desire* and *expect* Things more or less, according to the Estimate which our best and most impartial *Reason* makes of their Worth and Goodness. For he that affects Things more than in the Esteem of Reason they deserve, affects them *irrationally*, and regulates his Passion by his *wild* and *extravagant* Imagination, and not by his *Reason* and *Judgment*. And while Men do thus neglect their *Reason*, and accustom themselves to *desire*, and *love* and *affect* without it, they necessarily disable themselves to enjoy a *rational Happiness*. For, besides that their rational Faculties being thus *laid by*, and *unemployed*, will naturally contract *rust*, and grow every Day more *weak* and *restive*; besides, that their *unexercised* Reason will *melt away* in Sloth and Idleness, and all its vital Powers *freeze* for want of Motion, and, like standing Water, *stagnate* and gather *Mire*, and by Degrees *corrupt* and *putrify*, till at last it will be impossible to revive them to the *vigorous Exercise* and *Motion* wherein their Pleasure and Happiness consists; besides this, I say, by habituating ourselves to affect Things *irrationally*, *i. e.* to love the *least* Goods *most*, and the *greatest least*, we shall disable ourselves from enjoying any *Goods*, but only such as cannot make us happy. For he that loves any Good more than it is worth, can never be happy in the Enjoyment of it, because he *thinks* there is more in it than he *finds*, and so is always

disappointed in the *Fruition* of it. And the *Grief* of being disappointed of what he *expects*, does commonly countervail the *Pleasure* of what he *finds* and *enjoys*. While he is in the *Pursuit* of any Good which he *inordinately* dotes upon, he is *wild* and *imaginative*; he swells with *phantaſtick* Joys, and juggles himself into *Expectations*, that are as large and boundless as his *Desires*; but when once he is *seized* of it, and finds how vastly the *Enjoyment* falls short of his *Expectation*, his *Pleasure* is presently lost in his *Disappointment*, and so he remains unsatisfied as ever. And thus if he were to spend an Eternity in such *Pursuits* and *Enjoyments*, his Life would be nothing but an Everlasting Succession of *Expectations* and *Disappointments*. So that all *inordinate* Affection destroys its own *Satisfaction*, and necessarily renders us by so many Degrees miserable, as it exceeds the real *Worth* and *Value* of Things.

Besides which also it is to be considered, that all these *lesser* Goods, which are the Objects of our *extravagant* Affections, are Things which we must ere long be for ever *deprived* of: For the *lesser* Goods are those, which are only good for the *worser* Part of us, that is, for our *Body* and *Animal Life*; the proper Goods whereof are the *Outward Sensitive* Enjoyments of this World: all which, when we leave this World we must leave *for ever*, and go away into Eternity, with nothing about us, but only the Good or Bad *Dispositions* of our Souls. So that if our Soul be *carnalized* through our *immoderate* Affection to the Things of this World, we shall carry that *Affection* with us, but leave the Things which we thus
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vehemently *affect*, behind us for ever. For that which is the *prevailing Temper* of Souls in this Life, will doubtless be so in the other too ; so far is that of the Poet true,

— *Quæ gratia currûm*

Armorûmque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes

Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos.

For though the coming into the other World will questionless *improve* those Souls which are *really good* before, yet it is not to be imagined how it should *create* those *good* who are *habitually bad* ; and if we *retain* in the *other* World that *prevailing Affection* to these sensitive Goods which we *contracted* in *this*, it must necessarily render us unspeakably *miserable* there. For every *Lust* the Soul carries into the other World, will, by being eternally separated from its *Pleasures*, convert into an *hopeless Desire*, and upon that account grow more *furious* and *impatient*. For of all the Torments of the Mind, I know none that is comparable to that of an outrageous *Desire* joined with *Despair* of Satisfaction ; which is just the Case of sensual and worldly minded Souls in the other Life, where they are full of *sharp* and *unrebated* Desires, and like starved Men, that are shut up between two dead Walls are tormented with a *fierce* and *hopeless* Hunger, which having nothing else to feed on, preys and quarries on *themselves* ; and in this desolate Condition they are forced to wander to and fro, tormented with a restless *Rage*, an hungry and unsatisfied *Desire*, craving Food, but neither *finding*, nor *expecting* any ; and so in unexpressible

Anguish they pine away a long Eternity. And though they might find Content and Satisfaction, could they but *divert* their Affections another way and reconcile them to the heavenly Enjoyments ; yet being irrecoverably -preingaged to sensual Goods, they have no Savour or Relish of any thing else, by are like *feverish Tongues* that disgust and nauseate the most grateful Liquors by Reason of their own *overflowing Gall*. So impossible is it for Men to be happy, either here or hereafter, so long as their Affections to the lesser Goods of this World do so immoderately exceed the Worth and Value of them.

One Essential Part therefore of the *Christian Life*, which is the greatest *Means* of our Happiness, is the Virtue of *Moderation* ; the peculiar Office whereof is to bind our *Concupiscible* Affections, and proportion them to the Intrinsic Worth of those outward Goods which we *affect* and *desire*. For though the Word *Moderation*, according to our present Acceptation of it, be no where to be found in the *New Testament* ; yet the Virtue expressed by it is frequently enjoined ; as particularly where we are forbid to *set our Affections upon the Things of the Earth*, Col. iii. 2. *To love the World or the Things that are in the World*, 1 Joh. ii. 15. Which Phrases are not to be so understood as if we were not to love the Enjoyments of the World *at all* ; for they are the Blessings of God, and such as he has proposed to us in his Promises as the *Rewards* and *Encouragements* of our Obedience ; and to be sure, he would never encourage us to obey him by the Hope of such Rewards as are *unlawful* for us to desire and love : The meaning therefore
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of these Prohibitions is, that we should so *moderate* our Affections to the World, as not to permit them to exceed the real Worth and Value of its Enjoyments. For it is not *simply* our loving it, but our loving it to *such a Degree* as is inconsistent with our Love of God that is here forbidden; for *he that loveth the World*, saith St. John, *the Love of the Father is not in him*, i. e. he that loves it to such a Degree as to *prefer* the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of it *before God* and his *Duty* to him, hath no real Love to God, i. e. he loves not God, *as God*, as the chiefest Good and Supreme Beauty and Perfection. And hence *Covetousness*, which is an immoderate Desire of the World, is called *Idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. because it sets the World in the Place of God, and gives it that supreme Degree of Affection which is only due to him; and this the Apostle there calls *Inordinate Affection*, because it extravagantly exceeds the Intrinsic Worth and Value of its Objects. Wherefore we are strictly enjoined to *take heed and beware of Covetousness*, Luke xii. 15. And to *let our Conversation be without Covetousness*, Heb. xiii. 5. By all which and sundry other Commands and Prohibitions of the Gospel, the *Moderation* of our *Concupiscible* Affections is made a necessary part of the *Christian Life*.

Now that this also mightily contributes to our Acquisition of the *Heavenly Happiness*, is evident, not only from what hath been already said, but also from hence, that till our Affections are thus *moderated*, we can have no Savour or Relish of the *Heavenly Enjoyments*, For in this corrupt State of our Nature, we generally *understand* by

our *Affections*, which like *coloured Glass*, represent all Objects to us in their own *Hue* and *Completion*. When therefore a Man's *Affections* are immoderately carried out towards worldly Things, they will be sure by Degrees to corrupt and deprave his *Judgment*, and render him as unfit to judge of divine and spiritual Enjoyments, as a *Plowman* is to be a *Moderator* in the *Schools*. For when a Man's Thoughts have been employed another way, and the Delights of *Sense* have for a long while pre-occupied his *Understanding*, he will judge Things to be *Good* or *Evil* according as they *disgust*, or *gratify* his lower Appetite; and this beings the Standard by which he measures Things, it is impossible he should have any Savour of those *Spiritual Goods* in which the Happiness of Heaven consists. For though in his Nature there is a Tendency to *Rational Pleasures*, yet this he may, and very frequently does, stifle and extinguish by addicting himself wholly to the Delights and Gratifications of his *Sense*, which by Degrees will so melt down his *Rational Inclinations* into his *Sensual*, and confound and mingle them with his *Carnal Appetites*, that his *Soul* will wholly sympathize with his *Body*, and have all *Likes* and *Dislikes* in common with it; and there is nothing will be capable of pleasing the *One*, but what does gratify the unbounded Liqueurishness of the *Other*.

Now to such a Soul the spiritual World must needs be a *barren Wilderiness*, where no good grows that it can live upon, none but what is nauseous and distasteful to its *coarse* and *vitiating* Palate; where there are noble Entertainments indeed for
Minds

Minds that are *contempered* to them, that have already tasted and experienced them; but not one drop of Water to cool the Tip of a *Sensual* Tongue, or gratify the Thirst of a *Carnal* Desire. So that were we admitted to that Heavenly Place where the Blessed dwell, yet unless we had acquired their Heavenly *Disposition* and *Temper*, we could never participate with them in their Pleasures. For so great would be the Antipathy of our sensual Affections to them, that we should doubtless fly away from them, and rather chuse to be for ever *Insensible*, than be condemned to an everlasting *Perception* of what is so *ungrateful* to our Natures. So that till we have in some Measure moderated our *Concupiscible* Affections, and weaned them from their excessive Dotages upon *sensual* Good, it is impossible we should enjoy the Happiness of Heaven; for such perfect Opposites are a *Spiritual* Heaven; and a *Carnal* Mind, that unless this be *spiritualized*, or that be *carnalized*, it is impossible they should ever meet and agree.

III. Another Virtue that belongs to a Man, considered merely as a *Rational Animal*, is FORTITUDE; which in the largest Sense consists in not permitting our *Iracible* Affections to exceed those Evils or Dangers which we seek to repel or avoid; in keeping our *Fear* and *Anger*, our *Malice*, *Envy*, and *Revenge*, in such due subjection as not to let them exceed those Bounds which Reason, and the Nature of Things, prescribe them. For I do not take *Fortitude* here in the narrow Sense of the *Moralists*, as it is a Medium between *Irrational Fear* and *Fool-hardiness*; but as it is the Rule

Rule by which all those *Irascible* Passions in us, which arise from the Sense of any Evil or Danger, ought to be guided and directed; that by which we are to guard and defend ourselves against all those *troublesome* and *disquieting* Impressions which outward Evils and Dangers are apt to make upon our Minds: And in this Latitude *Fortitude* comprehends not only *Courage*, as it is opposed to *Fear*; but also *Gentleness*, as it is opposed to *Fierceness*; *Sufferance*, as it is opposed to *Impatience*; *Contentedness*, as it is opposed to *Envy*; and *Meekness*, as it is opposed to *Malice* and *Revenge*; all which are the Passions of *weak* and *pusillanimous* Minds, that are not able to withstand an Evil, nor endure the least Touch of it without being *startled* and *disordered*; that are so softened with Baseness and Cowardice that they cannot resist the most gentle Impressions of Injury. For as sick Persons are *offended* with the Light of the Sun, and the Freshness of the Air, which are highly *pleasant* and *delightful* to such as are well and in Health; even so Persons of weak and feeble Minds are easily offended, their Spirits are so tender and effeminate, that they cannot endure the least Air of Evil should blow upon them; and what would be only a *Diversion* to a courageous Soul, *troubles* and *incommodes* them. And whatsoever *Courage* such Persons may pretend to, it is meerly a Heat and Ferment of their Blood and Spirits; a *Courage*, wherein *Game-cocks* and *Massiffs* out-vy the greatest *Heroes* of them all. But as to that which is truly Rational and Manly, which consists in a firm Composedness of Mind in the Midst of evil or dangerous Accidents, they are

are the most wretched Cowards in Nature. For the true *Fortitude* of the Mind consists in being hardned against Evil upon *Rational Principles*; in being so fenced and guarded with *Reason* and *Consideration* as that no dolorous accident from without is able to invade it, or raise any violent Commotions in it; in a word, in having such a constant Power over its *Irrascible* Affections, as not to be over-prone either to be timorous in Danger or envious in Want, or impatient in Suffering, or angry at Contempt, or malicious and revengeful under Injuries and Provocations. And till we have in some measure acquired this Virtue, we can never be happy either here or hereafter.

For whilst we are in this World, we must expect to be encompassed with continual Crowds of Evil Accidents, some or other of which will be always pressing upon and justling against us: So that if our Minds are *fore* and *uneasy*, and over-apt to be *affected* with Evil, we shall be continually *pained* and *disquieted*. For, whereas were our Minds but *calm* and *easy*, all the Evil Accidents that befall would be but like a shower of Hail upon the Tiles of a Musick-house, which with all its *Clatter* and *Noise* disturbs not the Harmony that is *within*; our being too apt to be moved into Passion by them, *uncovers* our Mind to them, and lays it open to the Tempest. And commonly the greatest Hurt which these outward Evils do us, is, their *disturbing* our Minds into violent Passions; and this they will never cease doing, till we have thoroughly *fortified* our Reason against them. For if our *Reason* commands not our Passions,

Passions, to be sure *outward Accidents* will; and while they do so, we are Tenants at will to them for all our Peace and Happiness; and according as they happen to be *Good* or *Bad*, so must we be sure still to be *Happy* or *Miserable*. And in this Condition, like a Ship without a Pilot in the midst of a Tempestuous Sea, we are the sport of every Wind and Wave, and know not, till the Event hath determined it, how the next Billow will dispose of us; whether it will dash us against a *Rock*, or drive us in a quiet *Harbour*.

So miserable is our Condition *here*, while we are utterly destitute of this Virtue of *Fortitude*; but much more miserable will the want of it necessarily render us *hereafter*. For all those Affections which fall under the Inspection and Government of *Fortitude*, are, in their *Excesses*, naturally vexatious to the Mind, and do always disturb and raise Tumults in it. For so *Wrath* and *Impatience* distracts and alienates it from itself, and confounds its Thoughts, and shuffles them together into a heap of wild and disorderly Fancies; so *Malice*, *Envy*, and *Revenge* do fill it with anxious biting Thoughts, that like young Vipers gnaw the Womb that bears them, and fret and gall the wretched Mind that forms, and gives them Entertainment. And though in this World we are not so sensible of the Mischief which these black and rancorous Passions do us; partly because our Sense of them is *abated* with the Intermixture of our bodily Pleasures; and partly because while we operate, as we do, by these unwieldy Organs of Flesh, our Reflections cannot be comparably so *quick*, nor our Passions so *violent*,
nor

nor our Perception so *brisk* and *exquisite* as they will doubtless be when we are stript into naked Spirits: yet if we go away into the other world with these Affections *unmortified* in us, they will not only be far more *violent* and *outrageous* than now, and we shall not only have a far *quicker* Sense of them than now; but this our sharp Sense of them shall be *pure* and *simple*, without any Intermixture of Pleasure to soften and allay it. And if so, Good Lord! what exquisite *Devils* and *Tormentors* will they prove, when an extreme *Rage* and *Hate*, *Envy* and *Revenge* shall be all together like so many hungry Vultures, preying on our Hearts: and our Mind shall be continually *baited* and *worried* with all the furious Thoughts which these outrageous Passions can suggest to us! When with the meagre Eyes of *Envy* we shall look up towards the Regions of Happiness, and incessantly *pine* and *grieve* at the Felicities of those that inhabit them; when through a Sense of our own *Follies*, and of the miserable effects of them, our *Rage* and *Impatience* shall be heightened, and boiled up into a *Diabolical Fury*; and when at the same time, an Inveterate *Malice* against all that we converse with, and a fierce desire of *Revengeing* ourselves upon those who have contributed to our Ruin, shall, like a Wolf in our Breasts, be continually gnawing and feeding upon our Souls, what an insupportable *Hell* shall we be to ourselves! Doubtless that *Outward Hell* to which bad Spirits are condemned is very terrible; but I cannot imagine, but that the worst of their Hell is *within* themselves and that their own Devilish Passions are severer *Furies* to them than all those
Devils

Devils that are without them. For *Wrath* and *Envy*, *Malice* and *Revenge* are both the Nature and the Plague of Devils; and though, as Angels, they are the Creatures of God; yet, as Devils, they are the Creatures of these their Devilish *Affections*; they were these that transformed them from Blessed Angels into cursed Fiends, and could they but once cease to be *envious* and *malicious*, they would cease to be Devils, and turn blessed Angels again, If then these rancorous Affections have such a malignant Influence as to *blacken* Angels into Devils, and make them the most miserable who were once the most *happy* Creatures, how can we ever expect to be happy so long as we indulge and harbour them?

Wherefore to remove this great Impediment of our Happiness, Christianity strictly enjoins us to practise this necessary Virtue of *Fortitude*, which consists in the due Regulation of all these our *Irascible* Affections; in moderating our *Anger* and *Impatience*, suppressing our *Envy* and extinguishing all our unreasonable *Hatred* and Desire of *Revenge*. For hitherto tend all those Evangelical Precepts which require us to *put away all bitterness and wrath, all clamour, and evil speaking and malice*, Eph. iv. 31. *to lay aside all malice, and to be children in malice*, 1 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. *to be strengthened with all might unto all patience and long-suffering*, Col. i. 11. And accordingly all the Virtues which are comprehended in this of *Fortitude* are reckoned among the Fruits of that Blessed Spirit by which we are to be guided and directed, Gal. v. 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness*; all which
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are nothing but this great Virtue of Fortitude, severally exerting itself upon those several *Iraſcible* Affections that are in us, and guiding and regulating them according to those Laws and Directions which right Reason severally prescribes them, and setting such Bounds and Limits to each of them as are necessary to the Peace and Happiness of our Rational Natures; That so when outward Dangers or Evils do excite them, they may not start out into such wild Excesses as to become *Plagues* and *Diseases* to our Minds.

Now how much the Practice of this Virtue conduces to our Heavenly Happiness is evident from hence, that all the Diseases and Distemperatures which our Mind is capable of, are nothing else but the *Excesses* of its *Concupiscible* and *Iraſcible* Affections; nothing but its being affected with Good and Evil *beyond* those Limits and Measures which right Reason prescribes. Did we but love outward Goodness according to the value at which true Reason rates them, we should neither be vexed with an *Impatient Desire* of them while we *want*, nor disappointed of our *Expectation* while we *enjoy* them. And when our Desires towards these outward Goods are reduced to that Coolness and Moderation as neither to be *impatient* in the *Pursuit*, nor *dissatisfied* in the *Enjoyment* of them, it is impossible they should give any Disturbance to our Minds. And so on the other hand, did we but take care to regulate our Resentments of Outward Evils and Dangers as right Reason advises, they would never be able to *hurt* or *discompose* our Minds. For right Reason advises that we should not so resent them as
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to *increase* and *aggravate* them; that we should not add the Disquietude of an *anxious Fear* to the Dangers that threaten us, nor the Torment of an *outrageous Anger* to the Indignities that are offered us, nor the Smart of a *peevish Impatience* to the Sufferings that befall us: in a Word, that we should not aggravate our Want through an *invidious pining* at anothers Fulness, nor sharpen the Injuries that are offered us, by a *malicious and revengeful* Resentment of them. And he that follows these Advices of Reason, and conducts his *irascible Affections* by them, has a Mind that is elevated above the Reach of Injury; that sits above the Clouds in a calm and quiet Æther, and with a brave Indifferency hears the rowling Thunders grumble and burst under its Feet. And whilst outward Evils fall upon *timorous* and *peevish* and *malicious* Spirits, like Sparks of Fire upon a heap of Gunpowder, and do presently blow them up, and put them all in Combustion, when they happen to a *dis-passionate* Mind they fall like Stones on a Bed of Down, where they sit easily and quietly, and are received with a calm and soft Compliance. When therefore by the continual Practice of *Moderation* and *Fortitude* we have tamed and civilized our *Concupiscible* and *Irascible* Affections, and reduced them under the Government of Reason, our Minds will be free from all *Disease* and *Disturbance*, and we shall be liable to no other Evil but that of Bodily Sense and Passion. So that when we leave our *Bodies*, and go into the World of *Spirits*, we shall presently feel ourselves in perfect *Health* and *Ease*. For the *Health* of a reasonable Soul consists in being
perfectly

perfectly Reasonable, in having all its Affections *perfectly* subdued to a well-informed Mind, and clothed in the Livery of its Reason. And while it is thus, it cannot be diseased in that *Spiritual* State wherein it will be wholly separated from all *bodily* Sense and Passion; because it has no Affection in it that can any way disturb or ruffle its calm and gentle Thoughts. And then feeling all within itself to be *well*, and as it *should* be; every String turned into a perfect Harmony; every Motion and Affection corresponding with the most perfect Draughts and Models of its own Reason, it must needs highly *approve* of, and be perfectly *satisfied* with itself; and while it surveys its own Motions and Actions, it must necessarily have a most delicious Gust and Relish of them, they being all such as its best and purest Reason approves of with a *full* and *ungainsaying* Judgment. And thus the Soul being cured of all *irregular* Affection, and removed from all *corporeal* Passion, will live in perfect *Health* and *Vigour*. and for ever enjoy within itself a Heaven of *Content* and *Peace*.

IV. Another Virtue which appertains to a Man considered merely as a *Rational Animal* is TEMPERANCE; which consists in not indulging our *Bodily Appetites* to the hurt and prejudice of our *Rational Nature*; Or, in refraining from all those *Excesses* of-bodily Pleasure, of Eating Drinking, and Venery, which do either *disorder* our *Reason*, or *indispose* us to enjoy the pure and spiritual Pleasures of the Mind. For, besides that all Excesses of *bodily* Pleasures are naturally prejudicial to our *Reason*, as they indispose those

bodily Organs by which it operates: (For so *Drunkenness* dilutes the Brain, which is the Mint of the Understanding, and drowns those Images it stamps upon it in a Flood of unwholsom Rheums and Moistures: and *Gluttony* clogs the Animal Spirits, which are, as it were, the Wings of the Mind, and indisposes them for the Highest and Noblest Flights of Reason; so *Wantonness* chafes the Blood into Feverish Heats, and by causing it to boil up too fast into the Brain, disorders the Motions of the Spirits there, and so confounds the *Phantasms*, that the Mind can have no clear or distinct perception of them; by which means our Intellectual Faculties are very often *interrupted* and forced to sit still for want of proper Tools to work with, and so, by often *loitering*, grow by degrees *listless* and *inactive*, and at the last, are utterly *indisposed* to any Rational Operations) Besides this, I say, (which must needs be a mighty prejudice to our Rational Nature) by too much *familiarizing* ourselves to *bodily* Pleasures, we shall break off all our *acquaintance* with *spiritual* ones; and grow, by degrees, such utter strangers to them, that we shall never be able to relish and enjoy them: and our *Soul* will contract such an *Uxorious Fondness* of the *Body* (that being the Shop of all the Pleasure it was ever acquainted with) that 'twill never be able to live happily without it. For though in its separate state it cannot be supposed that the Soul will retain the *Appetites* of the Body; yet, if while it is in the Body, it wholly abandons itself to *Corporeal* Pleasures, it may, and doubtless will, retain a vehement *hankering* after it, and *longing* to be re-

united

united to it : which, I conceive, is the only Sensuality that a separated Soul is capable of. For when such a Soul arrives into the Spiritual World, her having wholly accustomed herself to *bodily Pleasures*, and never experienced *any other*, will necessarily render her incapable of enjoying the Pleasures of pure and blessed Spirits. So that being left utterly destitute of all her dear Delights and Satisfactions, which are such as she knows she can never enjoy but in *conjunction* with the *Body*, all her Appetite and Longing must necessarily be an outrageous Desire of being *Embodied* again, that so she may be capable of repeating her old *sensual Pleasures*, and acting over the *brutish Scene* anew.

And this, as some think, is the Reason why such *gross* and *sensual* Souls have appeared so often after their separation, in the *Churchyards*, or *Charnel-Houses* where their bodies were laid ; because they cannot please themselves with-

out them : Ἡ δὲ (Ψυχὴ) ἐπιθυμητικῶς τὸ σῶμα ἐκούσα, περὶ ἐκεῖνο πολὺν χρόνον ἐπισημένη, καὶ περὶ τὸν ἔρατον τόπον πολλὰ ἀντιτείνασα, καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα, βίαι καὶ μόλις ὑπὸ τῆς προσέλαιγμένης δαίμονος οἴχεται ἀγομένη. Plat. Phæd. pag. 308.

The Soul that is infected with a great Lust to the Body, continues so for a great while after Death, and suffering great Reluctancies, hovers about this visible place, and is hardly drawn from thence by force, by the Demon that hath the Guard and Care of it. Where by the *visible Place* he means, Περί τὰ μνήματά τε καὶ τὰς τάφους περὶ ἃ δὴ καὶ ὤφθε ἀτρεῖα ψυχῶν σκιοειδῆ φαντάσματα. Ibid. Pag. 386. That is, About

their Monuments and Sepulchres, where the shadowy Phantasms of such Souls have sometimes appeared. For being utterly unacquainted with the Pleasures of Spirits, they have nothing in all the spiritual World to feed their hungry Desire, which makes them, when they are permitted to wander, to hover about, and linger after their Bodies; the Impossibility of being re-united to them not being able to cure them of their impotent Desire of it, but still they would fain be alive again, and re-assume their old Instruments of Pleasure;

—*Iterumque ad tarda reverti*

Corpora: —

—*Quæ lucis miseris tam dira Cupido?*

And hence, among other Reasons it was, that the Primitive Christians did so severely abstain from bodily Pleasures, that by this means they might gently wean the Soul from the Body, and teach it before-hand to live upon the Delights of separated Spirits; that so upon its separation it might drop into Eternity, like ripe Fruit from the Tree, with Ease and Willingness; and that by accustoming it before to *spiritual* Pleasures and Delights, it might acquire such a savoury Sense and Relish of them, as to be able, when it came into the *spiritual* World, to live wholly upon them, and to be so entirely satisfied with them, as not to be endlessly vexed with a tormenting Desire of returning to the Body again. For so *Clemens*

Pædag.

l. 2. c. 1.

pag. 141.

Alexandrinus, Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς θηρωμένοις
τὴν βρωσιν τὴν ἐπαράνιον, ἀρχεῖν ἀνάγκη
τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔρανον γαστροῦ, ἥτι τε
μᾶλλον

μαλλον κ̃ τῶν ταύτῃ προσφιλῶν. *We that are hunting after the Heavenly Food, must take heed that we keep our Earthly Belly in Subjection, and to keep a strict Government over those things that are pleasant to it.* For saith he a little before. "Ου̃ε

γὰρ ἔργον ἡμῶν ἡ τροφή, ἔτε σκοπὸς ἡδονή. Ibid. Pag.

ὑπὲρ δὲ τῆς ἐνταῦθα διαμονῆς, ἣν ὁ λό- 139,

γος εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν παιδαγωγεῖ. *Nei-*

ther, saith he, is Food our Work, nor Pleasure our Aim, but we use them only as Necessaries to our present Abode, in which our Reason is instituting, and training us up to a Life incorruptible; i. e. They did so use them, as that, as much as in them lay, they might wean their Souls from the Pleasures of them, that so they might have the better Appetite to that spiritual Food upon which they were to live for ever.

And therefore thus to *temperate* and *restrain* ourselves in the use of bodily Pleasures is one of the necessary Virtues of the *Christian Life*. For hitherto tend all those Precepts concerning *abstaining from fleshly Lusts* which war against our Souls, 1 Pet. ii. 11. and *mortifying the deeds of the Body*, Rom. viii. 13, and *keeping up the Body*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. and *putting off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh*, Col. ii. 11. And we are strictly enjoined to be *temperate in all things, to watch and be sober, and walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in excess of Wine, revellings and banquetings*; The sense of all which is, That we should not indulge our *bodily Appetites* to the *vitiat*ing and *depraving* of our *spiritual*; that we should not plunge ourselves so far in the Pleasures of the *Flesh*, as to

drown our Sense and Perception of *Divine* and *Heavenly* Enjoyments; but that we should so far subdue and mortifie our *Sensuality*, as that it may not have the *Dominion* over us, nor be the *prevalent* Delight and Complacency of our Souls; but that the *commanding* Bias, and *swaying* Propension within us may be towards Divine and Heavenly Enjoyments; that so, when we leave this Body, we may not be so *wedded* to the Pleasures of it, as not to be able to be happy without them; but that we may carry with us into Eternity such a quick Sense and lively Relish of the Pleasures above, as to be able to *live upon*, and be for ever *satisfied* with them.

So that at first View it is evident how much the Practice of this Virtue conduces to our future Happiness. For by taking us off from all excess of bodily Pleasure, it disposes us to enjoy the Pleasures of Heaven, and *connaturalizes* our Souls to them: So that when after a long Exercise of *Temperance*, we come to leave the *Body*, our Soul will be so loosened from it before-hand, and rendered so indifferent to the *Delights* of it, that we shall be able to part both with *It* and *Them* without any great *Regret* or *Reluctancy*, and to live from them for ever without any disquieting *Longings* or *Hankerings* after them. For, as when we are grown up by Age and Experience to a Sense of more *manly* Pleasures, we despise Nuts and Rattles, which, when we were *Children*, we accounted our Happiness, and should have reckoned ourselves undone had we been deprived of them; So when by the Practice of a severe *Temperance*, we have acquired a thorough sense of the Pleasures

tures of *Virtue* and *Religion*, we shall look upon all our *bodily* Pleasures as the little Toys and Fooleries of our Infant State, with which we pleased our childish Fancies when we knew no better. And whereas had we been deprived of them *then*, we should have cried and bemoaned ourselves, as little Children do when they lose their Play-Games, and reckon ourselves undone and miserable; upon the Experience we have had of the *nobler* and more *generous* Pleasures of Religion, we shall be able to despise these *little poor* Entertainments of our Infancy; to take our leave of them without a Tear in our Eyes, and to live eternally without missing them. For, our Minds being for the main reconciled to *Rational* and *Spiritual* Pleasures. we shall put off all remains of *bodily* Lust with our *Bodies*, and so flie away into the spiritual World with none but *Pure* and *Spiritual* Appetites about us; where meeting with an *infinite Fulness* of Spiritual Joys and Pleasures, of which we had many a *foretaste* in the Body, our *predisposed* Mind will presently close with, and feed upon them, with such an *unspeakable* Content and Satisfaction, as will *ravish* it for ever from the Thoughts of all other Pleasures. So that now we shall not only be able to *subsist* without Fleishly Delights, but to *despise* and *scorn* them; our Faculties being treated every moment with far *nobler* Fare, and *better* Joys.

V. Another of those Virtues which belong to a Man considered meerly as a *rational Animal*, is HUMILITY; which consists in a *modest* and *lowly* Opinion of ourselves; and of our own *Acquisitions*, *Merits*, or *Endowments*; Or, in not

valuing ourselves beyond what is *due* and *just*, upon the account of any Good we are possessed of, whether it be *Internal* or *External*. For *Pride*, or an over-weaning *Self-Conceit* is the Bane of all our Virtue and Happiness. It causes us to overlook our *Defects*, and thereby hinders us from making further *Improvement*; and it possesses us with an Opinion that we *deserve* more than we have, and thereby renders us *dissatisfied* with our present Enjoyment. For by how much any Man *over-values* himself, by so much he *under-values* what he enjoys; because while he compares what he enjoys with the fond Opinion that he hath of himself, he always finds it *short* of his Desert, and so can never be *satisfied* with it. Yea, such is the cross and capricious Humour of a proud Spirit, that the more it possesses. the bigger it swells with the *opinion* of its own Desert; and the *more* it is opinionated of its own Desert, the *less* it is satisfied with that which it possesses and enjoys. For when a Man is exceeding apt to *flatter* and *coax* himself, he will catch at any pretence to exalt his own Merit and Desert, and be ready to measure it, not only by what he *is*, but by what he *has* too; and than reckoning his *outward* Possessions to be the Rewards or Products of his *inward* Worth, the more he *has*, the more he will still imagine he *deserves to have*. So that his *Opinion* of his own *Desert* will still run on so fast before his *Enjoyments*, that though they should follow it never so close, as the hinder Wheels of a Chariot do the Fore ones, yet would be impossible for them to overtake it; And so long as he conceives his Enjoyments to be *behind* his Desert, he will be
always

always *discontented* and *dissatisfied* with them; and while he continues of this Humour, the utmost Bliss and Glory that Heaven affords would not be able to satisfy him. For if he were set equal in Glory with the *highest Saint*, he would be so puffed and exalted by it in his own Conceit; that he would fancy he merited the Glory of an *Angel*; and if from thence he were advanced to the Throne of an *Arch-Angel*, he would flatter himself into a Conceit that he deserved the Glory and Dignity of a *God*: And so long as he fancied his Advancement to be *below* his Merit, he would never be *contented* with it, how *high* soever it were, but be continually *vexing* and *repining* that he was raised no *higher*.

And this I verily believe was the Temper of the *Devil*, and that which finally ruined and undid him. For when he was an *Angel* of *Light*, he was doubtless placed by the *Father of Spirits*, in such an Order or Degree of Dignity as became the Perfection of his Nature. But he, reflecting on his own Endowments, and the glorious Condition wherein he was placed, began first to swell with an *arrogant* and *over-weaning* Conceit of himself, and to set *too high* a Value upon his own Angelical Graces and Perfections; and, as the natural Effect of this, to imagine that he was not high enough advanced in the Scale of the *Heavenly Hierarchy*, and that his *Station*, in the Commonwealth of *Angels* was *beneath* the Grandeur and Dignity of his Nature. This made him look up with *envious* Eyes upon the glorious Orders *above* him, into whose sublime Rank he being forbid to aspire by God, the Prince of Spirits, he proceeded

proceeded by Degrees to malign and hate both *him* and *them*. And this he first expressed by entring into a *Conspiracy* against him with some of his Fellow-Angels, who he found most apt to be wrought upon by him; together with whom he made an open *Revolt*, forsook the blessed Abodes, as not enduring to abide any longer amongst those blessed Orders whom he so inveterately *hated* and *envied*; and so with his revolted *Legions* descends into this airy Region, where ever since he hath persisted in open Hostility against God and Heaven. And accordingly it is said of him and his Accomplices, that they *kept not their first Station*, that is, they would needs have a *higher Station* in Heaven than that wherein God had placed them; which because they could not obtain, *they left their own Habitation, i. e.* forsook Heaven, their native Country and Abode, and came down into these lower Parts of the World, upon Design to strengthen their Party against Heaven by seducing Mankind into the same Revolt with themselves, *Jude 6.*

Thus it was the Devil's *Pride* you see, that made him *envious*, his *Envy* that made him *spiteful* and *malicious*, all which together made him a *Devil*. And thus it would be with *us*, if we could be admitted into Heaven whilst we are under the Power and Prevalence of *Pride* and *Self-Conceit*. For while we think better of ourselves, than God does, we shall never be *contented* with his Retributions, who will be sure to deal with every Man according to his Works; and that excessive Value we shall have of 'ourselves, will cause us to *undervalue* the Degree and Rank of
 Glory

Glory and Happiness wherein we shall be placed by the just Rewarder of Souls as a Station much beneath our imaginary Excellency and Perfection. And hence we shall proceed to *think hardly* of God, and to repine against him as a partial and unequal Distributer of his Favours, and to *envy* and *malign* those that were placed higher in Glory than ourselves; and so at last, out of an implacable *Vexation* and *Discontent*, to leave our Habitations, as the Devils did, and fly away to their revolted Party. So impossible is it for a Soul that is under a prevailing Habit of *Pride* and *Self-conceit* to be happy either here or hereafter.

And therefore to remove this Obstacle, Christianity imposes the Practice of *Humility*, as a necessary Means of our Happiness; and requires us *to put on Humbleness of Mind*. Col. iii. 12. *to be clothed with Humility*, 1 Pet. v 5. *to walk with all Lowliness and Meekness*, Eph. iv. 1, 2, and in *Lowliness of Mind to esteem others better than ourselves*, Phil. ii. 3, In a word, to follow the Example of our blessed Lord, who was *meek and lowly*, Mat. ix, 29. and *in honour to prefer one another*, Rom, xii. 10. The Sense of all which is, that we should labour, as much as in us lies, to think very *meanly* and *modestly* of ourselves, and not to be discontented if *others* think *meanly* of us too; *i. e.* that we should neither be *proud* nor *vain-glorious*, neither too much exalted in our *own* Opinions, nor endeavour to insinuate into *others* a higher Opinion of us than we do really deserve: In short, that we should so effectually represent to ourselves the little Reason we have to be proud of any personal Accomplishment, whether it be of Body, or Mind, to strut, like

like *Æsop's* Crow, in these borrowed Feathers, which we could neither *give* to ourselves, nor *Merit* of God, but are wholly owing for to the divine Bounty ; so to inculcate upon our Minds the Folly and Ridiculoufness of being proud of any *outward Goods* we possess, such as fine Cloaths, great Estates, or popular Reputation, all which are so far from either *making* or *speaking* us *wiser* or *better* Men, that they are too often the Fruits and Testimonies of our *Folly* and *Knavery* ; and, in fine, that we should so impartially reflect upon the many Follies and Indiscretions, Errors and Ignorances, Irregularities of Temper, Defects of Manners, and Deviations from right Reason, that we are guilty of, as to shame ourselves out of all those *proud* and *arrogant* Conceits that do so *swell* and *impostumate* our Minds.

And when by these, and such like *humbling* Reflections, we have laid ourselves low in our own Eyes, and so far abated our *Pride* and *Self-conceit* as to be effectually convinced of the Folly of it, and throughly persuaded to abhor and hate it, to watch and strive against it, and to be habituated for the main to *mean* and *lowly* Thoughts of ourselves ; though we should not here arrive to an absolute Perfection in *Humility* (having none here to converse, or compare ourselves with but such as ourselves, such as are many of them our *Inferiors*, many our *Equals*, and many but few Degrees our *Superiors*) yet, as soon as we go off from this *lower* Form, in which we may seem so considerable, into the Class and Society of those glorious Inhabitants *above*, (in whose bright
Presence

Presence we shall appear but like so many *Glow-Worms* in the Midst of a Firmament of *Stars*) all the *little Remains* of Pride and Self-conceit in us will immediately vanish from our Minds. For if at the Sight of an Angel the *beloved Apostle* could not forbear prostrating himself; how *prostrate* and *lowly* must we be, when we see not only the whole Choir of Angels together, but God himself too, the Prince and Father of Spirits! For even here we find that the *nearer* we approach God, the more we *shrink* and *lessen* in our own Eyes; and if in the Presence of *Angels* we are but *Dwarfs*, in the Presence of *God* we shall be *Nothings*. But Oh! when we shall not only *discern* how infinitely he out-shines us in Glory, but shall also continually *feel*, by the most sensible Communications of his Goodness, how we hang upon him, and derive every Breath, and Joy, and Glory from him; how Being and Well-being are the meer Alms and Pensions of his Bounty; how every Grace and Beauty in us is but the Reflection, and that a faint one too, of his out-stretched Rays; when, I say, we shall feel all this, as we shall do in Heaven every Moment, by a quick and sensible Experience, how must it needs wean us from all *self-arrogating* Thoughts, and perfectly *abase* and *humble* us in our own Eyes! And when this is done, our Minds will be perfectly *tempered* and *prepared* for the Enjoyment of a perfect Happiness; for now, such a *modest* Opinion we shall have of ourselves, that whatsoever Degree of Glory we are placed in, we shall look upon it as far beyond our Desert, and, upon that account, be unspeakably *satisfied* and *contented* with it, and freely
acknowledge

acknowledge it to be a thousand Degrees beyond what we could desire or hope for. And so far shall we be from *grudging* at, or *envying* those above us, that out of an *humble* Sense of our own Unworthiness we shall readily prefer them before ourselves, and freely acknowledge that we are only so many Degrees *inferior* to *them* in Glory, as they are superior to *us* in Divine Graces and Perfections. Upon which we shall not only *acquiesce*, but heartily *rejoice* in their Advancement, and be abundantly *pleased* that their *Reward* is as much greater than ours, as we do acknowledge their *Virtue* to be. In a Word, so far shall we be from *repining* and *murmuring* at God for not rewarding *us* as liberally as *others*, that we shall be thoroughly sensible that he hath been bountiful to us infinitely beyond our *Desert* or *Expectation*; that it was not out of a fond *Partiality*, or blind *Respect* of *Persons* that he raised others to higher Degrees of Glory than ourselves, but out of a Principle of strict *Justice* that exactly balances and adjusts its Rewards, according to the Degrees of our *Desert* and *Improvement*. The Sense of which will not only compose our Minds into a perfect *Satisfaction*, but also continually excite us to those beatifical Acts of *Love* and *Praise*, *Thanksgiving* and *Adoration*. Thus *Humility*, you see, tunes and composes us for Heaven, and only casts us down, like Balls, that we may rebound the higher in Glory and Happiness.

Thus you see how all those Virtues, which appertain to a Man considered as a *reasonable Animal*, conduce to the great Christian End, *viz.* The Happiness of Heaven. 'Tis true indeed the
immediate

immediate product of this sort of Virtues is only, at least *chiefly privative* Happiness, or the Happiness of *Rest* and *Indolence*, which consists in not *being miserable*, or, in a perfect *Cessation* from all such Acts and Motion as are *hurtful* and *injuriously* to a rational Spirit. For as I have shewed you in the Beginning of this Section. the proper Office of *human* Virtue consists in so regulating all our Powers of Action, as that we do nothing that is hurtful or injurious to our rational Nature; and this, you plainly see, these five aforementioned Virtues do most effectually perform. But besides this *privative*, there is, as I shewed you, a *positive* Part of Happiness, which consists not in *Rest*, but in *Motion*; in the vigorous Exercise of our rational Faculties upon such Objects as are most suitable to them; and to the obtaining of this Part of our Happiness, there other Kinds of Virtues necessary to be practised by us, of which I shall discourse in the two following Sections. But though the *immediate* Effect of these *human* Virtues we have been discoursing of, be only the Happiness of *Rest*, yet do they tend a great deal farther, even to the Happiness of *Motion* and *Exercise*. For it is impossible so to surpress that active Principle within us, as to make it totally surcease from Motion; and therefore as every Intermision of its *sober* and *regular* Actings does but make way for *wild* and *extravagant* ones; so every Abatement of its *hurtful* and *injuriously* Motions, makes way for *beatifical* ones; and so the *human* Virtues by giving us rest from those Motions, that are *affective* to our Natures, incline and dispose us to such Motion and Exercises as are most *pleasant* and *grateful* to it.

S E C T. II.

Concerning those Divine Virtues which belong to a Man considered as a reasonable Creature related to God, shewing that these also are comprehended in the heavenly Part of the Christian Life; and that the Practice of them effectually conduces to our future Happiness.

I Proceed now to the second Kind of Virtues, *viz.* Divine, to which I told you we are obliged in the Capacity of reasonable Creatures related to God; who being not only endowed with all possible Perfections, with infinite *Truth* and *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Justice*, and *Power*, with all that can render any being most highly *reverenced*, *admired*, *loved*, and *adored*; who being not only the Author of our Being, and Well-being, as he is Creator and Preserver of all Things, but also our Sovereign Lord and King, as he is God Almighty, the supreme and over-ruling Power of Heaven and Earth, hath upon all these accounts a just and unalienable Claim to sundry Duties and Homages from his Creatures; all which I shall reduce to these six Particulars:

1. That we should frequently *think of*, and *contemplate* the Beauty and Perfection of his Nature.

2. That upon the account of these Perfections we should humbly *worship* and *adore* him.

3. That we should ardently *love*, and take *complacency* in him.

4.

4. That

4. That we should attentively and unweariedly *imitate* him in all his imitable Perfections and Actions.

5. That we should intirely *resign up* ourselves to his Conduct and Disposal.

6. That we should chearfully *rely*, and *depend* upon him. All which, as I shall shew, are included in the Heavenly Part of the *Christian Life*, and do most effectually contribute to our future Happiness.

I. As we are rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged to be often *contemplating* and *thinking* upon him. For the natural Use of our Understanding is to contemplate Truth, and therefore the more of *Truth* and *Reality* there is in any knowable Object, and the farther it is removed from *Falshood* and *Non-entity*, the more the Understanding is concerned to *contemplate* and *think upon* it. God therefore being the most *true* and *real* Object, as he stands removed by the *Necessity* of his Existence from all *Possibility* of not being; must needs be the most perfect Theme of our Understanding, the best and greatest Subject, on which it can employ its Meditations. And besides that he is the most *true* and *real* of all Beings, he is also the Source and Spring of all *Truth* and *Reality*, his Power conducted by his Wisdom and Goodness being the Cause, not only of all that *is*, but of all that either *shall be*, or *can be*. And is it fit that our Understanding, which was made to *contemplate*, should wholly over-look the Fountain of it? But besides this too, that he is the greatest *Truth* himself, and the Cause of every Thing else that is *true* and *real*, he is the Sovereign of Beings,

and the most *amiable* and *perfect*, as he includes in his infinite Essence, all possible Perfections both in Kind and Degree. And what a monstrous Irreverence is it, for Minds that were framed to the Contemplation of Truth, to pass by such a *great* and *glorious* one without any Regard or Observance; as if he stood for a Cypher in the World, and were not worthy to be thought upon? Nay, and besides all this, (which one would think were enough to oblige our Understandings to the strictest Attendance to him) he is a Truth in which above all others we are most *nearly concerned*, as he is not only the *Father* and *Prop* of our Beings, and the *Consolation* of our Lives, but the sole *Arbiter* of our Fate too, upon whom our everlasting well or ill Being depends. And what can we be more concerned to *think* and *meditate* upon than this great Being, from whom we sprang, in whom we live and breathe, and of whom we are to expect all that Evil or Good that we can fear or hope for. All which considered, there is no doubt to be made but that our Understanding was chiefly made for God, to look up to him, and contemplate his Being and Perfections. And though in this *imperfect* State it is too often averted from him, by this vast Variety of sensual Things that surround it, and intercept its Prospect, yet as our Soul recovers out of this *sensual* Condition, into a Life of *Reason*, we find by Experience that its Understanding presently looks upwards, by a natural Instinct, and directs itself to God, as to its proper *Pole* and *Center*. And as it grows more and more *indifferent* to the Objects of Sense, so it becomes more and more *vigorous* in its tendency towards

towards God and divine Things, And it is no Wonder it doth so, since it is God only who is an *infinite* Truth, that is able to satisfy its *infinite* Thirst after Truth. And hence it is, that till we have throughly fixed our Minds and Wills upon God, we do naturally affect such an *Infinity* of Objects, that our Desires are always reaching at *new* Pleasures, and carried forth after *new* Possessions; that our Fancy is always entertaining our Mind with *new* Ideas, and our Understanding continually calling for *new* Scenes of Contemplation. By which, as one hath well observed, the Soul declares that it is not to be perfectly pleased with *finite* Truth or Good: Which possibly may be the Reason of that Delight we take in Fables, and Pictures of Anticks and Monsters, because they *exceed* the Limits of Truth, and so do *enlarge*, as it were, the Prospect of the Soul, which by its unconfined Motions, shews that it is of a Divine Extract, and that it can never be perfectly satisfied but in Union with God, who is an infinite Ocean of Truth and Goodness. For as for all other Beings, they are so very *shallow*, that we quickly see (or at least shall do, when we see after the Manner of Spirits) to the very Bottom of their Truth and Reality; and when we have done that, they have no more in them to feed and entertain our Understandings. So that when we have exhausted the Truth of *finite* Beings, we must either cease to understand any more, which would be to deprive our noblest Faculty of any further Pleasure, or we must at last fix our Mind upon God, in whom it will find such *infinite* Truth, as will be sufficient to exercise it through-

out all its *infinite Duration*. But unless we do *now* acquaint our Minds with God by frequent *thinking* and *meditating* upon him, we shall by Degrees grow such *Strangers* to him, that, by that time we go into the other World, we shall be so far from being *pleased* with contemplating him, that we shall look upon him as an *uncouth* Object, and out of Dislike *avert* and turn our Eyes from him. For the Mind of Man must be *familiarized* to its Objects, before it will be able to contemplate them with *Pleasure*, and though the Objects themselves be never so *amiable*, yet while the Mind is *unused* to them, its Thoughts will *start* and *fly off* from them, and without a great deal of Violence, will never be reduced to a *fixt* and *serious* Attention to them. So that if we go into Eternity with Minds *unaccustomed* to the Thoughts of God, we shall be continually flying away from him, as Bats and Owls do from the Light of the Sun, and never be able to compose our *awkward* Thoughts into a fixed Contemplation of his Glory. And when we have thus banished ourselves from the only Object that can for ever *bless* and *satisfy* our Understanding, that can keep it in everlasting *Exercise* and *Motion*, and feed its greedy Thoughts eternally with *fresh* and *glorious* Discoveries, we have utterly lost one of the sweetest Pleasures that Human Nature is capable of; and so must necessarily *pine* and *languish*, under an eternal Discontentedness. To prevent which, the Gospel, enjoins us to train up our Minds to Divine *Contemplation*, and to be frequently *thinking* and *meditating* upon God; *to mind those Things that are above*, for so the Greek Word is to be rendered, Col. iii. 1. *To sanctify the*
Lord

Lord God in our Hearts, 1 Pet. iii. 15. that is, by entertaining great and worthy Thoughts of him. And therefore the Gospel is set before us as a *Glass*, that therein we may *contemplate and behold the Glory of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. namely that divine Glory which is therein discovered and revealed to us; that we may set him always before our Minds, *and gather up* our Thoughts about him, and force them to *dwell* and *stay* upon him, that so they may taste and relish his heavenly Beauties, and please and satisfy themselves with the View and Contemplation of them. For though to meditate closely upon God may first be *irksome* and tedious to our unexperienced Minds, yet when by the constant Practice of it, we have worn off that *Strangeness* towards God, which renders the Thoughts of him so *troublesome* to us, and by frequent Converses are grown better acquainted with him, we shall grow by Degrees so *pleased* and *satisfied* with the Thoughts of him, that we shall not know how to live *without* them; and our Minds at last will be toucht with such a lively Sense of his attractive Beauties, that we shall never be well but while we were with him; so that he will become the constant Companion of our Thoughts, and the daily Theme of our *Meditations*; and nothing in the World will be so *grateful* and *acceptable* to us, as to retire now and then from the World, and converse with God in holy *Contemplations*. And though by Reason of our present *Circumstances* and *Necessities* there is no Remedy but our Thoughts must be often diverted from him, and forced to attend to our secular Occasions; yet after they have been used a while to God, we

shall find they will never be so well pleased, nor so much at ease as when they are retired from every thing but God, and composed and settled into divine Meditations. So that when we go away into the other World, where we shall be removed from those troublesome *Circumstances* and *Necessities*, which did here so often divert our Thoughts from God, our Minds which have been so *long* accustomed and habituated to him, will immediately fasten upon him, and entirely devote themselves to the Contemplation of his Nature and Glory. For our Minds being already strongly *inclined*, are *biased* towards God by those grateful Foretastes we have had of him in the Warmths of our Meditation, when we come into the still and quiet Regions of the Blessed, where we shall immediately have a more close and intimate View of him than ever, all our Thoughts will naturally run towards him, and be so captivated with the first Sight of his Glory, that we shall never be able to look off again, as long as Eternity endures, but one *View* will invite us to *another*, and what we see will so transport and ravish us, that we shall still desire to see farther and farther. And because our finite Mind will never be able fully to comprehend all that his *knowable* in his infinite Being, we shall be so delighted in every farther Knowledge of him, that we shall still desire to know farther, and that *Desire*, as fast as it springs, shall still be satisfied with a farther *Knowledge*, and so to eternal Ages, each new Satisfaction shall immediately spring a new Desire, and each new Desire immediately terminate in a new Satisfaction. And now, O happy Mind! What Tongue can express thy
joys

Joys and Raptures! that being thus in Conjunction with God, art always filled with glorious Ideas, and compassed round with the Wonders of his Perfection; so that at every Glance thou seest some new *Charm*, and with every Thought makest some vast *Discovery*. O the transporting Pleasure of that blessed Vision! which now I can hardly think of without an Ecstasy; when my poor longing Mind, which here gropes about for Truth in a dark Dungeon of Error and Ignorance, shall be let forth into the Heavenly Light, to see as it is seen and know as it is known, how will it fix its greedy Eyes upon God, of whose Acquaintance it is now so desirous! With what infinite Delight will its winged and active Thoughts hover in the Light of his Countenance, which through every Moment of Eternity will be still revealing new Beauties to us, such as will not only for ever *employ*, but for ever inflame our Meditations?

II. As we are Rational Creatures related to *God*, we are obliged humbly to *Worship* and *Adore* him, that is, that out of a most awful Esteem and profound Reverence of his super-excellent Majesty, and boundless Perfections, we should bow down our Souls before him, and address ourselves to him by *Invocation* and *Prayer*, by *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*, as to the All-sufficient, Independent, and sole Disposer of every good and perfect Gift; and that in these our Addresses we should outwardly express this our reverential Esteem of him, by such humble Gestures of Body, as are most apt to testify it to others. For all this is but a just and due Acknowledgment of what he is in *himself*; and to *us*, and all his *Creation*. The profoundest

Reverence and Veneration we can pay him, is but a just Acknowledgment of his Infinite *Majesty* and *Power*; the most fervent Invocations and Prayers we can offer him, are but a due owning of him to be what he is, the supreme *Disposer* and *Author* of all things; the most ample and glorious Praises we can give him are incomparably short of what is owing to his infinite *Excellencies* and *Perfections*; the most thankful Acknowledgments we can make him, are but poor Compositions for those vast Sums which we owe to his *Bounty* and *Liberality*. So that all our Worship is a most just Due arising from what he is in *himself*, and from what he doth to *us*, and to all his *Creatures*. And till we are made throughly sensible of both, we are utterly incapable of eternal Happiness; which consisting, as I shewed you before, in the vigorous Exercise of our Rational Faculties upon God, doth necessarily require that we should be duly affected with his Perfections and Actions. For unless we are so, we shall never be able to engage our Faculties vigorously to employ and exercise themselves about him; unless our Minds be over-awed with an habitual Sense of his infinite Majesty and Power, we shall be apt to neglect him as an Object too mean for our great Faculties to converse with; unless our Minds be strongly disposed to *esteem* and *admire* his Glory and Excellencies, we shall never be able to excite our Understanding and Will to act upon him with any Life and Vigour: In a word, unless we are possessed with a constant Sense that he is the *Spring* of all those Goods which we enjoy or hope for, we shall be apt to look upon him as one with whom we are very little concerned, and
so

so to neglect and disregard him. So that unless we do now acquire an habitual Devotion of Mind towards God, when we go from hence into the other World, we shall find our Faculties so *averse* and *listless* to all that heavenly Motion and Exercise wherein the Happiness above consists, that we shall be utterly incapable to taste and enjoy it. For in Eternity our Souls will run according to the prevailing Biass which they carry thither with them; but it is impossible they should run towards God with *Life* and *Freedom*, unless they are constantly drawn and inclined to him by a devout veneration of his Majesty, and admiration of his *Glory* and *Perfection*. And hence it is that the Gospel doth so strictly oblige us to *adore and worship God*, Rev. xxii. 9. *to worship him in Spirit and in Truth*, Joh. iv. 24. *to pray without ceasing*, 1 Theff. v. 17. and *pray always with all prayer and supplication*, that is, earnestly to supplicate God upon every fit opportunity and time of need, *Ephes. vi. 18.* in a word, *to offer to God the sacrifice of Praise, that is the Fruit of our Lips, giving thanks to his name*, Heb. xiii. 15. and *to thank God without ceasing*, 1 Theff. ii. 13. The meaning of all which is, that out of a deep and quick Sense of the infinite Majesty and Power, All-sufficiency and Beneficence of God, we should be frequently bowing ourselves before him, and offering up our Prayers and Praises, and Thankgivings to him. And in the constant Practice of these, we shall be growing up by degrees to that blissful state of Heaven. For all these Acts of divine Worship being immediate Addresses of our Minds to God, do so unite us to him, that in every
heartly

heartly Prayer, Praise, or Thanksgiving, we do in a manner touch and feel him. For so while we humbly adore his Majesty, we are sensibly struck with the Rays of it; whilst we earnestly *in-vocate* his Goodness and Mercy, we are touched with a strong attractive Virtue from him, whereby we plainly feel ourselves drawn up to him, and wrapt into a real Enjoyment of him: In a word, while we are offering our hearty Praises and Thanksgivings to him, we are under a captivating Sense of his infinite Glory and Beneficence, and with a sensible Touch of this his heavenly Fire, our Hearts are kindled and inflamed. Insomuch that while we are upon our Knees in a warmth and fervour of Devotion, our Minds have many times as *quick* a perception, as *strong* and *lively* a relish of God, as ever our bodily Palate had of the most gustful Meats or Liquors. So that by frequently repeating these our Devotions, we frequently repeat these our Sensations of God; which being often renewed will grow more *vigorous* and *constant*, and so at last improve into an *active*, *permanent*, and *habitual* Sense of him. And having thus acquired by our frequent and devout Worship, a *lively constant* feeling and perception of the Majesty and Glory, of the Bounty and Benignity of God, whenever we go into Eternity, this, like a vital Spring, will give a *perpetual Motion* to our Faculties; and vigorously exert and employ them upon God for ever. The quick and lively Sense we shall have of his infinite Majesty and Power, will for ever awe our Understandings and Wills into a strict Attention and Submission to him; and have such a commanding Power
over

over us as will even constrain us to regard him with the profoundest Reverence and Veneration. For there we shall have far greater and clearer apprehensions of his Majesty than ever we had in this imperfect State ; which will improve our pre-acquired Sense of it to such a degree of Respect and Veneration, as will for ever over-rule our Faculties, and keep our Understandings, Wills and Affections in close and strict Attendance to him. And as our sense of his Majesty will sweetly *command*, so our sense of his infinite Beauty and Beneficence will invincibly *allure* us to exert and exercise our Faculties upon him. For he that hath an affectionate sense of the Beauty and Goodness and Bounty of God, hath a Heart ready tuned for the Musick of Heaven, ready set and composed for everlasting Praises and Hallelujahs. So that when he goes away from hence into the other World, and is there admitted to a more intimate view of the *Perfections*, and a more abundant participation of the *Blessings* of God than ever, his predisposed Mind will immediately be seized with such a *strong pathetick* Sense of both, as that he will not be able to withhold expressing and venting it in the most rapturous strains of Admiration, and Praise, and Thanksgiving. And this will be his Business and Employment for ever, to admire and extol the Perfections of God, of which he will every moment make new and glorious Discoveries ; and to celebrate with grateful Acknowledgments the infinite Riches of his Bounty, of which he will every Moment have fresh and sweet Experiences. So that whilst by continual Acts of Praise,
and

and thanksgiving we endeavour to affect our Minds with a due sense of the Goodness and Bounty of God, we are practising before-hand the Musick of Heaven, and taking out the Songs of *Zion*; that so when we go from hence, we may be qualified and prepared to bear a part in the Cælestial Choir. So that true Devotion (you see) which consists in a quick and lively Sense of the infinite Majesty, Beauty, and Benignity of God, doth most effectually dispose the Mind to all those Divine and Heavenly Exercises wherein the state of Heaven consists.

III. As we are rational Creatures related to God, we are obliged to an unfeigned *love of*, and *complacency in* him. And that both upon the account of what he is in *himself*, as he is the most *lovely* and *amiable* of Beings, in whom there is an harmonious concurrence of all imaginable Beauties and Perfections, of Wisdom and Goodness, of Justice and Mercy, and every other amiable thing that can claim or attract a reasonable Affection, all which in infinite degrees are contempered together in his Nature: and also upon the account of his infinite Kindness and Beneficence to us. For besides that he hath compassed us round, like so many *fortunate Islands*, with a vast Ocean of external Blessings, in which there is all that is either *necessary*, *convenient*, or *pleasant* for our bodily Use and Enjoyment; besides that he hath inspired us with immortal Minds, and stamped them with those fair Impresses of his own Divinity, the Knowledge of Truth, and the Love of Goodness, which are both of them very forward Capacities of the highest Perfection, and most
exalted

exalted Happiness: In a word, besides that to supply and gratify these our noble Capacities he hath prepared for us an immortal Heaven, and furnish'd it with all the Pleasures and Delights that a Heaven-born Mind can desire or enjoy: besides all this, I say, he hath sent his own Son from Heaven to reveal to us the Way thither, and to encourage us to return into it, by dying for our Sins, and thereby obtaining for us a publick Grant and Charter of Mercy and Pardon, upon Condition of our return; yea, and as if all this were too little, he hath sent his *Spirit* to us in the room of his Son to abide amongst us, and as his *Viceregent* to derive on this vast design of his Love to us, to excite and persuade us to return into that sure way to Heaven, which he hath described to us, and to assist us all along in our Travel thither. So wondrous careful hath he been not to be defeated of this his kind Intention to make us everlastingly happy. And now what Heart can be so *hard* and *impenetrable* as to resist such powerful *Charms* and *Endearments*! Methinks if we had but the common Sense and Ingenuity of Men in us, it would be impossible for us to reflect upon such Miracles of Beauty and Love, without being intimately *touched* and *affected* with them. But till we are so, it will be impossible for us to enjoy Heaven; for how can we freely exert our Faculties upon an object that we do not *love*; and if we cannot, how can we without *loving* God enjoy Heaven; which consists in the free and chearful Out-goings of all our Faculties upon him? For if when we go into Eternity we *love* him not, either he will be *indifferent*, or *hateful* to us; if
he

the *former*, we shall altogether neglect and take no notice of him ; if the *latter*, we shall either flie away from him, and banish ourselves from his Presence, or be forced to abide and endure it with extreme Regret and Torment. For whilst our Minds are *averse* and *repugnant* to him, whatsoever we see in him will but the more enrage and canker our Malice against him ; and even the sight of those his glorious Perfections, which so enravish the Hearts of the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven, will only provoke and boil up our Dislike of him to a higher Degree of Hatred and Averſation. For ſo we find by Experience in this Life, that while our Minds are *unreconciled* to God, it is a *Penance* to us to come near him, to admit any Thoughts of, or Converſation with him. And this is the reaſon why we take ſo much Pains-as we do to miſrepreſent him to ourſelves, to draw ſuch Pictures and Ideas of him upon our Minds, as beſt correſpond with our own Tempers ; that ſo having thus transformed our Notion of him into the Image of ourſelves, *Narciſſus*-like we may fall in love with him, or at leaſt more eaſily endure his bleſſed Preſence and Converſation. When therefore we ſhall go into the other World, where all theſe Diſguiſes of the divine Idea ſhall be taken off, and *we ſhall ſee him as he is*, circled about with his own Rays of unſtained and immaculate Glory, we ſhall never be able to *abide* him ; but being all *affrighted* and *confounded* at the Glory of his Preſence, we ſhall be forced to *run away*, and, if poſſible, to *hide* ourſelves from him in everlaſting *Darkneſs* and *Deſpair*. For our Wills being poiſoned and infected with an habitual

Enmity

Enmity against him, it must needs be Torment to us to *see* him, because we must always see him *happy*; which is so great an *Eye-sore* to those damned Spirits that hate him, that I am apt to think, that next to being delivered out of their own *Misery*, the chiefest Good they desire or wish for is, to be delivered from the tormenting Sense of his *Happiness*. For what greater Torment can our Mind endure, than to be an everlasting Spectator of the Bliss and Happiness of one whom it *hates*! How then will it fret and gall our *meagre* and *envious* Spirits to see that blessed Being whom we cannot endure, surrounded with an infinite Happiness; with a Happiness so *vast*, as that it can admit of no *Increase*, and yet so *secure*, as that it can never suffer a *Diminution*? So that 'tis impossible, you see, for the Mind of Man to live happily upon God in the other Life, unless it be inspired before-hand with an hearty *Love and Affection* to him.

And hence it is that our holy Religion doth so strictly require us *to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our Soul, and with all our mind*, Matt. xxii. 37. *to love him because he loved us first, to delight ourselves in the Lord*, Psal. xxxvii. 4. *and to rejoyce in the Lord*, Phil. iii. 1, *and to rejoyce in the Lord always*, Phil. iv. 4. *i. e.* to be habitually complacent or well pleased with the infinite Beauty, Goodness, and Perfection of the Divine Nature. Nay, of such vast import is the Love of God in the account of the Gospel, that it is there recommended as the proper Principle of Christian Life. For so, Rom. xiii. 10. we are told that *love is the fulfilling of the Law*, that is, the adequate Principle

Principle of all Christian Obedience ; and *Gal. v. 6*, we are told that *neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision availeth any thing in Christ Jesus, but Faith which worketh by Love* : that is, there is nothing of any account with Christ, but such a Belief of the Gospel, as begets in us a hearty Love to God, and doth thereby work and exert itself, as by that which is the only genuine Principle of Christian Life and Action 'Tis true, beside this Principle of Love, the Gospel acts us both by our Fear and Hope, exciting the one by Threatnings of the greatest Evils, and animating the other with Promises of the greatest Goods ; but yet it is certain that neither *these*, nor *any other* Principles of religious Action can be acceptable to God, whilst they are totally separated from Love to him, For there is no Principle of Obedience can be acceptable to God that is not a Principle of Universal Obedience ; but to *love* God being a great and main Instance of Obedience, that can be no Principle of Universal Obedience, which doth not effectually excite us to *love* him.

'Tis true, the Religion of most Men begins upon the Principles of Hope and Fear, and it cannot be denied but these are good *Beginnings* ; but yet till by these we are excited to *love* God, as well as to do the other Parts of our Duty, our Obedience is *lame* and *partial*, and consequently *unacceptable*. So that though Hope and Fear are good *Ingredients* to compound an acceptable Principle of Obedience, yet without an *Intermixture* of Love they are by no Means sufficient. There may be indeed, and at first there generally is,
much

much less of Love in this internal Spring of our Obedience than of Hope or Fear, whilst yet the whole *Composition* is truly pleasing and acceptable to God. For the lowest Degree of cordial Love, intermixed with our Hope and Fear, is sufficient to *leaven* and *consecrate* them into an acceptable Principle of Obedience; but still the less of Love there is in it the more *weak and languid*, and *imperfect* it is, and in all its Progresses towards Perfection, its *Ripeness* and *Maturity* is to be measured by the Degrees of Love that are in it. And till our Love is arrived to that Degree of Fervour and Ardency, as to become the *predominant Motive* and *Master-ingredient* of this our compounded Principle of Obedience, our State in Goodness is very *low and imperfect*, So that in short, the Principle that acts and moves us in Religion, is still more and more perfect, the *more* of Love there is in it, and the *less* of Hope and Fear; and when Hope and Fear are both swallowed up in Love, and this is become the sole Spring of Action in us, then it is the *Principle* of Heaven, the *Soul* that acts and animates the Religion of *just Men made perfect*.

So that if ever we design to grow up to *their* blessed State, we must endeavour to *kindle* and *blow up* the Love of God in our Hearts. And in order hereunto we must be frequently representing to our own Minds, the infinite Reasons we have to *love* him, and pressing ourselves with the vast Obligations he hath laid upon us; spreading them fairly before our Thoughts in all their *endearing* Circumstances. We must ever and anon set our *cold* and *frozen* Souls before those *melting*,

Flames of his Love and Beauty, and never leave *chasing* at them, *urging* and *pressing* them with the Consideration of them, till we feel the heavenly Fire begin to *kindle* in our Bosoms. And above all Things we must take care by the constant Practice of what is agreeable to God's Nature, to reconcile our Minds and Tempers to him ; for till this is done we can never be habitually *pleased* or *delighted* in him ; but when once by the Practice of those eternal Rules of Goodness that are founded in his blessed Nature, we have so far reconciled our Natures to him, as that *our* Hearts and *his* stand *bent* the same Way, and are for the main alike *inclined* and *disposed*, then we are prepared for, and made proper and convenient *Fuel* to receive this heavenly *Flame* of Love to him ; and when this is once so thoroughly *kindled* in our Hearts, as that we are habitually *well pleased* and *delighted* in him, so as to *rejoice* in his Happiness, *acquiesce* in his Will, and *meditate* on his Beauty and Goodness. with an unfeigned *Complacency* of Soul, we are then in the same State (that is in Kind, though not in Degree) with the blessed People of Heaven. And though in this Life we may not be able to raise ourselves to that Height of Love as we *desire*, and much less as that blessed Object *deserves*, our present Knowledge being *short*, our Thoughts *unsteady*, and our Affections *entangled* in Sense and sensual Things ; yet when we go from hence into the other World, and are there admitted to a more intimate View of his Nature, Works, and Perfections, our imperfect Love will be immediately improved into an high Seraphick Flame. For now we shall not only

know

know him better, having him always in our View; and continually shining full in our Eyes; but we shall be removed from all other Objects that are apt to divert our *Thoughts*, and divide our *Affections* from him. So that now our Love being kindled and fed with the purest Light, with the ever out-streaming Rays of the most perfect Beauty and Goodness, will always exert its utmost Vigour, and spend itself without Decay in one continued everlasting Rapture.

And then how unconceivably happy will our State be, when we shall always live in *View* of the most *lovely Object*, and always *love* him as much as we *are able*, and *be able* to love him a thousand Times more than we can now *imagine*! For the longer we *view*, the more we shall *know* him, and the more we *know*, the better we shall *love* him, and so through everlasting Ages our Love shall be *stretching* and *extending* itself upon his infinite Beauty and Loveliness. Now Love is naturally a most *sweet* and *grateful* Passion, a Passion that *sooths* and *ravishes* the Heart, and puts the Spirits into a *brisk* and *generous* Motion. For it wholly consists in a fixed *Complacency* or *Well-pleasedness* of Mind, arising from the apprehended Goodness and Congruity of the Thing beloved; and it is meerly by accident that it hath any *disquieting* or *ungrateful* Emotion mingled with it. Either the Person beloved is *absent*, which fills it with *unquiet Desire*; or he is *unhappy*, or *unkind*, which mingles it with *Grief* and *Sorrow*; or he is *fickle* and *inconstant*, which imbitters it with *Rage* and *Jealousy*; but consider it separately from all these Accidents, and it is nothing but pure *Delight* and

Complacency. But now in Heaven our Love of God will have none of these *disquieting* Accidents attending it, for there he will never be *absent* from us, but continually entertaining our amorous Minds with the prospect of his infinite Beauties; there we shall ever *feel* his Love to us in the most *sensible* and *endearing* Effects, even in the Glory of that Crown which he will set upon our Heads, and in the ravishing Sweetness of those Joys he will infuse into our Hearts; there we shall experience the *continuation* of his Love in the continued Fruition of all that an everlasting Heaven means, and be convinced, as well by the perpetuity of his Goodness to us, as by the immutability of his Nature, that he is an *unchangeable* Lover: In a Word, there we shall find him a most happy Being, *happy* beyond the vastest wishes of our Love, so that we shall not only *delight* in him as he is infinitely *lovely* and *amiable*, but *rejoice* and *triumph* in him too as he is infinitely *blest* and *happy*. For Love unites the *Interests* as well as the *Hearts* of Lovers, and mutually *appropriates* to each, each other's Joys and Felicities. So that in that blessed State we shall share in the Felicity of God proportionably to the Degree of our Love to him. For the more we love him, the more we shall still *espouse* his happy Interest, and the more we are *interested* in his Happiness, the happier we must be, and the more we must enjoy of it. Thus Love gives us a real Possession and Enjoyment of God; it makes us Co-partners with him in himself, and derives his Happiness upon us, and makes it as really *ours* as *his*. So that God's Happiness is as it were the common *Bank* and *Treasury* of all
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divine Lovers, in which they have every one a *Share*, and of which, proportionably to the Degrees of their Love to him, they do actually *participate* to all Eternity. And could they but love him as much as he *deserves*, that is *infinitely*, they would be as *infinitely* blessed and happy as *he*. For then all *his* Happiness would be *theirs*, and they would have the same delightful Sense, and Feeling of it all, as if it were all transplanted into their own Bosoms, God therefore being an infinitely *lovely*, infinitely *loving*, and infinitely *happy* Being, when once we are admitted to dwell for ever in his blessed Presence, our Love to him can be productive of none but *sweet* and *ravishing* Emotions; for the immense Perfections it will then find in its Object, must necessarily refine it from all those Fears and Jealousies, Grievs and Displeasures that are mingled with our *carnal* Loves, and render it a pure *Delight* and *Complacency*. So that when once it is grown up to the Perfection of the heavenly State, it will be all Heaven, it will be an eternal Paradise of Delights within us, a living Spring whence Rivers of Pleasures will issue for evermore. O blessed State, in which my Heart shall be brim-full of Love, and my Love shall triumph alone within me, and be all Joy and Ravishment, being removed for ever out of the Noise and Neighbourhood of all those disquieting Affections which here are wont to mingle with, and continually disturb and incommode it!

IV. As we are rational Creatures related to God, we are obliged attentively to *imitate* him in all his imitable Perfections and Actions. For this

is an allowed Maxim, *Perfectissimum in suo genere est mensura reliquorum*, that is, that which is most perfect in its kind is to be the Rule and Measure of all those individual Natures that are contained under it. For *Perfection* is the Measure of *Imperfection*, even as a straight Line is of a crooked, and every Individual of a Kind must needs be so far *defective* in its Nature, as it *falls short* of that which is most *perfect* in its Kind. God therefore being the most perfect of all in the whole Kind of reasonable Beings, must needs be the supreme Pattern of all those Individuals that are under him; and so far as any of them *disagree* with him; so far they are *defective* in their Natures.

Ἀρχέτυπον φύσεως λογικῆς ὁ θεός ἐστὶ, μίμημα δὲ καὶ ἀπεικόνισμα ἀνθρώπου, *Phil. lib. 2. pag. 132.*

i. e, God is the Archetype of every reasonable Nature, and Man is his Imitation and Image. For he is a Being that is infinitely reasonable in all his Volitions and Actions, that hath not the least Intermixture either of Humour or Folly, or Prejudice in his Choice, but is always, and in every Thing governed by his own pure and all comprehending Wisdom, Upon which account he ought to be owned and looked upon by every reasonable Being, as the Sovereign Standard and Pattern of their Natures; and so far as any reasonable Nature moves or acts *counter* to his, which is the most *perfectly* reasonable, so far it ought to be looked upon as *monstrous* and *unnatural* in its Kind. For as it is monstrous in a human Body to have its Parts displaced, its Mouth opened in its Belly, or its Legs growing out of its Shoulders, because these are unnatural Positions, that are directly
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contrary to the true Idea, Form and Figure of a human Body : so every reasonable Nature that doth not *imitate* and *take after* God's, but chuseth and acts contrary to him, is so far monstrous and mishapen, because it is *withered* and *distorted* into a Figure that is directly contrary to its natural Pattern and Exemplar. And while it continues so, it is not capable of true Happiness. For that which renders God so infinitely happy in himself, is not so much the Almighty Power he hath to defend himself from foreign Hurts and Injuries, as the exact Agreement of all his Motions and Actions, with the all-comprehending Reason of his own Mind. For he always sees what is best, and what he sees is best he always *chuses* and *affects*, and this makes him perfectly satisfied with himself, and fills him with infinite Joy and Complacency ; because whenever he surveys himself in the glorious Mirrour of his own Mind, he discerns nothing in himself but what is infinitely *lovely*, nothing but what exactly corresponds with the *fairest Ideas* of his own infinite Reason. Whereas if, upon an impossible supposal, it were otherwise, there would arise a *civil War* within his own Bosom, against which *Omnipotence* itself could not *protect* or *defend* him. For in Despight of himself he would be continually exposed to the just *Reproaches* of his own Mind, and his own All-seeing Eye would every Moment *deteect*, and *libel*, and *upbraid* him, and render him a most *inglorious* Spectacle to himself, So that he would be so far from being infinitely *pleased* and *satisfied* with himself, that his own infallible Reason would be an everlasting *Vexation* to him.

And so will *ours* be to us, unless we take care to *imitate* God in those his divine Perfections, from whence his infinite *Self-Satisfaction* arises, For so long as we are conscious to ourselves that we wilfully *swerve* and *deviate* from the great Exemplar of our rational Natures, we cannot but be *ashamed of* and *condemn* ourselves, and be highly *dissatisfied* with our own Actions. Our Conscience must necessarily *reproach* our Will, and our Reason *upbraid* our base Inclinations. Now what an intolerable Plague is it for a Man to be forced to make *invectives* against himself, and continually to carry his own *Satyrs* in his Bosom? In this Life indeed, what by *disguising* our Faults with specious Names, or *colouring* them over with plausible Pretences; what by *bribing* our Conscience with false Presumptions, or *diverting* our selves from listening to their Reproaches by hurrying into Vice or Business, we may happily make a shift to deal well enough with ourselves. But alas! what shall we do when we come into the other World, where all fair Colour and Pretence shall be *wiped off*, and our Vices and We shall appear to ourselves in our own *naked* and *undisguised* Ugliness; where all our false Presumption shall be *baffled* by a woful Experience, and all the din of worldly Pleasure and Business in which we were wont to drown the Clamours of our Conscience shall be for ever *silenced*; so that we shall be exposed without Fence or Guard to the furious Reflections of our own Mind, and lie stark naked under the lash of an enraged Conscience for ever? O good God! what Tongue can express the intolerable Anguish of such a State; wherein our
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own Deformities shall be continually objected to our Eyes. and we shall have nothing to palliate or excuse them, but be always forced to *condemn*, and *hate*, and *curse* ourselves for them, and yet not be able to *correct* and *reform* them, wherein we shall still be hurried on to such Actions by our own furious Inclinations, as when we have done them will *startle* and *amaze* us, set on our Reason and Conscience to *worry* us with their reproachful Reflections, yet in Despight of all their Reproaches we shall still *reiterate* and *repeat* them! Like a desperate Murderer, who having killed an innocent Person, reflects with *Horror* upon his own Act, *tears* his Hair, *beats* his Breast, *curses* and calls himself a thousand Villains; but being hereby chafed into a greater Fury, instead of *reforming* grows more *mischievous*, and so murders another, and then rages *afresh*, but still the more he *rages*, the more he *murthers*. And this will necessarily be our State in the other World, if, through our neglect of *imitating* God, we go away thither under an habitual Contrariety of Nature to him. Besides that we shall be wholly indisposed to those beatifical Acts of divine Love, Worship and Contemplation, in which, as I have shewed, a great Part of the Pleasure of Heaven consists. For since all Love is founded in Likeness, and Likeness is the Effect of Imitation, how is it possible we should love God unless we imitate him; and if we do not love him, what Pleasure can we take in contemplating and adoring him?

Wherefore in Prosecution of its great Design, which is to make us happy, the Gospel strictly

strictly requires us to be always *imitating*, so far as they are imitable, the Perfections and Actions of our heavenly Father; to endeavour to *form* our Natures to his, *rectify* the Features and Lineaments of our Souls by his most amiable Idea; to be continually *framing* our Tempers by the noble Pattern of his Mercy and Goodness, his Justice, Purity, and Wisdom; that so being *new cast* as it were in the perfect Mould of his Nature, we may be *transformed* into living Images of him. So *Ephes. v. 1.* *Be ye therefore μιμηταί, imitators, or followers of God, as dear Children, i. e.* that so you may resemble him in the Qualities of your Minds, as Children do their Parents in the Lineaments of their Bodies. And this is the Sense of all those Evangelical Injunctions, which require us *to be pure as God is pure, merciful as he is merciful, and perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect*; that is, to take Example by God in the whole course of our Lives, and trace and follow him in all his imitable Perfections, by *putting on that new, that God-like Man*, that Divine Temper and Disposition, *which after God*, that is according to the Pattern of his Nature, *is created in righteousness, and true holiness, Ephes. iv. 24.* This therefore is an essential Part of our *Christian Life*, to set God always before our Eyes, as the great Pattern of our Lives and Actions, and to endeavour constantly to write after him and transcribe his Graces into our Natures: that so when we go away into the other World, we may carry with us at least a rude and imperfect Draught of his blessed Image upon our Minds, such as when we are removed from the manifold Impediments of Flesh and Blood and the perpetual

perpetual Diversions of this sensible World, and admitted to a nearer view of God, may be a prevailing Bias upon our Wills, and incline us to imitate him for ever. For if for the main we are here transformed by imitating God into a *god-like* Temper and Disposition, all those *involuntary Contrarieties* to him, which by Reason of our Ignorance of his Nature, of our bodily Temper, and the manifold Temptations we are here exposed to, are still remaining in our Natures, will be immediately extinguished upon our arrival into the other World; where being freed from all our *Misconceptions* of God, from all the *Repugnancies* of our bodily Temper to him, and from all those *Temptations* that were wont to avert us from him, we shall have no *involuntary* Disposition or Inclination in us; and then our Wills being already predominately inclined to follow God, and take Example by him, and having no contrary Inclination to contend with, we shall presently *attend to* and *imitate* his Perfections, with the greatest Vigour, Freedom and Alacrity of Soul. So that now we shall be so *intensely* fixed to chuse and act like God, who is the Example and Pattern of our Natures, that we shall everlastingly regulate all our Motions by those very eternal Laws of Reason, whereby he everlastingly wills and acts; and there is nothing will be so abhorrent to our Natures as an *ungodlike* Will or Action. For if, as the Apostle tells us, *by beholding now the Glory of God in a Glass, we are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor, iii. 18. then doubtless much more shall we be so, when we behold him *face to face*. 'Tis true, as our *Knowledge* of God who is
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an infinite *Truth* can never be *absolutely perfect*, because if it were it would be an *infinite Knowledge*; so neither can our *resemblance* of him be, who is an infinite *Goodness*, because if it were we should be *infinitely Good*; both which are Contradictions to the State of a Creature: yet as we shall be *knowing* him farther and farther, so proportionably we shall be *imitating* him too through infinite Ages of Duration; and still every Act of our Imitation shall be so *attentive* and *vigorous*, that it shall leave a further Impression of his infinite Perfection on our Natures. So that though our *finite* Nature can never arrive to a *perfect* Likeness of that infinitely lovely and amiable Being, because it can never be *infinitely* amiable; yet it shall be everlastingly *approaching* nearer and nearer to him, proportionably as it discovers more and more of his infinite Beauty and Amabilities, and be still growing more *wise* and *pure*, more *righteous* and *benign*, according as its prospect of the *Wisdom*, *Purity*, *Justice* and *Goodness* of his Nature is enlarged and extended. So that as his Beauty shines into us, it will still imprint itself upon us, and transform us into blessed Images of itself; and then, according as we are assimilated to the divine Nature, we shall still partake of those Joys, and Pleasures which are inseparable to it, and resemble it in Bliss as much as we do in Perfection. For as God's *infinite* Perfection is the Spring of his *infinite* Self-satisfaction, so from our *finite* Perfection there shall ever redound to us a Satisfaction equal to our *finite* Capacities. For though we shall never attain to *absolute* Perfection, that is to all the *possible Degrees* of Wisdom and Goodness,
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which is the Peculiar of God; yet to Eternity we shall be *growing on* to it, and in every Period of our Growth, we shall be perfectly what we *ought to be*, that is, we shall ever *know* as much of God as his possible for us, our present State and Circumstances considered; and so far as we *know* of him we shall to our utmost Power continually *intimate* and *resemble* him. And thus in our eternal Race to perfection, our Wills shall always follow our Understanding, and our Understandings shall always follow God with their utmost Vigour and Activity; so that neither the *one* nor the *other* shall ever be deficient of any Degree of Knowledge and Goodness which *pro hic & nunc* is possible to them.

Now what an unspeakable Satisfaction must this give to the Mind, when surveying itself round about, it shall find every thing within itself exactly as it *ought to be*; every Faculty to its utmost Power and Capacity perfectly *corresponding* with its original Pattern and Exemplar; when upon the strictest Scrutiny it will discover nothing within itself, but what the most *critical* Conscience will be forced to approve of; no Motion or Action, but what will endure the Test of its *severest* Reason: In a word, when it shall interchangeably turn its Eyes from God to itself, and compare Grace with Grace, and Feature with Feature, and perceive what an amiable Consent and Agreement there is between its own *Copy* and his fair *Original*; what a pure *Imitation* of God its Life is, and how exactly *Deiform* all its Motions and Actions are: when I say, our blessed Minds shall always find themselves in this *God-like* Posture
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and Condition, O! what incomparable Content and Satisfaction will they take in themselves! With what enravishing Pleasure will they ever review their own Motions, which being immediately copied from the Nature of God, will be such as its severest Reason will be always forced to commend and approve of! So that now the happy Mind will be always *triumphing* in its own Purity, and enjoy within itself an everlasting Heaven of Content and Peace; now it will continually be *crowned* with the applauses of its own Reason, and all its Actions will have the joyful *Echoes* of a well-pleased Conscience continually resounding after them. And thus by imitating God's *Perfections*, we shall imitate his *Happiness* too, and shall for ever *take after* him, not only in respect of the Rectitude of our Natures, but also in the most blessed and comfortable Enjoyment of ourselves. Besides that our Resemblance of God will everlastingly dispose us to *Love*, and our Love to *contemplate* and *adore* him. For all these blessed Acts do reciprocally further and promote each other; just like contiguous Bodies that are placed in a Circle, the first of which being moved Thrusts on the second, the second the third, the third the last, if there be no more between; and then the last Thrusts on the first, and so round again in the same Order. So that if we carry with us into Eternity a Frame and Disposition of Nature like God's, we shall always so *imitate* as still to *love* him, so *love* as still to *contemplate* him, so *contemplate* as still to *adore* him, so *adore* as still to *imitate*, and *love* and *contemplate* him a new; and in this blessed Circle we shall move

round for ever, with unspeakable Vigour and Alacrity.

V. As we are reasonable Creatures related to *God*, we are bound to *resign up*, and *submit* ourselves to his blessed Will and disposal. For *God* hath a just Dominion over all, founded in his own infinite Power, that doth not like other Dominions result to him from any External Acts or Achievements, but is the Eternal Prerogative of his own Nature. For he, as well as all other Beings, hath a Freedom to Exercise his own Abilities so far as is *just* and *lawful*; but being infinitely paramount to all other Powers whatsoever, he can be subject to no *superior* Authority, nor consequently be obliged by any *other* Law but that of his own Nature. So that whatsoever he *can* do, he can *justly* do, if it be not contrary to the infinite Perfections of his Nature. For his Power being infinite, and unconfined as well as his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, doth sufficiently warrant him to do whatsoever is consistent with *them*; otherwise he would be infinitely powerful in vain. And therefore since he *can* exercise a Dominion over all, he must needs have an Eternal Right to do it, so far as his own Wisdom, Goodness and Justice will permit, which are the only Laws by which he can be *bounded* in the Exercise of his infinite Power and Ability. So that while he governs us by such Rules and Laws, as are convenient to his own Nature, his own Greatness and Power, which exalts him above all other Law or Authority, sufficiently warrants him so to do. And being thus *rightfully* enthroned by the infinite Preeminence of his own Power and Majesty,

jeſty, all other Beings, ſo far as they are capable, ſtand immutably obliged to *ſubmit* and *reſign* themſelves up to his Government.

But beſides that we are obliged to him as he is *God*, we are alſo bound to him as he is our *Creator*. For there is always a Power acquired by *Benefits*, where there is none *antecedently*; eſpecially where the Benefit conferred is no leſs than that of our Being, which is the Caſe between us and God. And this is ſuch a Benefit as is ſufficient to entitle him to us, by an *absolute* and *unalienable* Propriety, though he had no *antecedent* right of Dominion over us by Virtue of his own infinite Greatneſs. So that though before he created us, or any other Being, he had free Power to Act any thing that lay within the Compaſs of *juſt* and *lawful*, which *juſt* and *lawful* was not definable by any other Law but that of his own Nature; and though ſince his Creation his Power is no more, (ſo that he hath not acquired to himſelf any new Power, by creating us, but only made new *Subjects* whereon to exerciſe that ancient Power, and Dominion which was eternally inherent in him) yet doubtleſs by giving us our Beings, he hath laid *new* Obligations upon us to obey him. For now *deriving* ourſelves, as we do, from him, we are bound by all the ties of Equity and Juſtice to *render back* ourſelves to him, and to ſubmit thoſe Powers to his Dominion, which are the Effects and Off-ſpring of his Bounty. For what can be more juſt and equal, than that *that* Will which is the *Cauſe* of our Beings, ſhould be the *Law* and *Rule* of our Actions; than that we ſhould ſerve him with thoſe Powers we derive from him, and
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render him back the Fruits of his own Plantation? For now we are not *our own*, but *God's*, and He alone hath Power to dispose of us; and whensoever we dispose of ourselves contrary to his Will and Pleasure, we do not only *invade* his Property, but employ the Spoils of it *against* him. And whilst we continue thus doing, it is impossible we should ever be happy. For besides that, while we continue in Rebellion against him, we are in an actual Confederacy with Hell; for so when we are told that Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, that is, Rebellion against God, the meaning is, that, like Witches, we are in League with the Devil, and are listed Volunteers under those infernal Powers, who for blowing the Trumpet of Rebellion in Heaven were banished thence six thousand Years ago, and have ever since been raising Forces in this lower World against God; so that whilst we continue with them in Defiance to God, we are in the Devil's Muster-roll, who is Captain General of all the revolted Legions, and so are of the quite opposite Party to the Loyal People of Heaven, and consequently can never hope, while we continue such, to be admitted to their Society and Happiness; besides all this, I say, Rebellion against God doth naturally draw a Hell of Miseries after it. For it cannot be supposed that the wise Sovereign of the World should be so unconcerned for his own Authority, as to suffer his Creatures to *spurn at* and *affront* it without ever manifesting his Displeasure against them in some *dire* and *sensible* Effects. And therefore though in *this* Life, which is the Time of our Trial and Probation, he mercifully

forbears *to lead us to Repentance* ; yet if we leave this Life with our Wills *unsubdued* and *unresigned* to him, we must not expect to be thus gently dealt with in the other. For it is as easy for him who is the Father of our Spirits, to correct our Spirits, as it is for the Parents of our Flesh to correct our Flesh. And though our Souls are no more impressible with *material* Stripes, than Sun-beams are with the Blows of a Hammer ; yet are they liable to have horrid and dismal *Thoughts* impressed upon them, and to be as much aggrieved by *them*, as sensible Bodies are with the most exquisite Torments. So that if God be displeased with us, there is no doubt but he can *imprint* his Wrath upon our Minds, in black and ghastly Thoughts, and cause it perpetually to *drop* like burning Sulphur on our Souls. And it being in his Power thus to lash our Spirits, to be sure, when once he is implacably incensed against us, (as he will be in the other World, if we go Rebels thither) he will more or less let loose his Power upon us, and make us feel his wrathful Resentments, by infusing supernatural Horrors into our Souls, and scourging our guilty and defenceless Spirits with Inspirations of dire and frightful Thoughts. Now though this be not a *natural* and *necessary* Effect of our Rebellion against God, because it depends upon his Will who is a free Agent ; yet considering that he is a *wise* Agent, and that as such it is necessary he should one way or other manifest his Displeasure against such as are unreclaimable Rebels to his Authority, it is *next* to a natural one ; and at least the fearful Expectation of it in such rebellious Spirits (which is a Misery next to the enduring it)

it) is *necessary* and *unavoidable*, For God hath imprinted a dread of his own Power and Majesty so deeply on our Natures, that we are not able with all our Arts of Self-deceit wholly to *obliterate* and deface it; and though in this Life we may sometimes *suppress* and *stupify* our Sense of God, yet even *here*, in despite of ourselves, it will ever and anon *return* upon us. And if when we have done what we know is offensive to that invisible Majesty we stand in awe of, we do but suffer ourselves seriously to *reflect* upon it, there presently arises in our Minds a swarm of *horrid* Thoughts and *dismal* Expectations; and if in this present State, in which we have so many Salvo's for our wounded Spirits, so many Pleasures and Self-delusions to charm our natural dread of God, our overcharged Consciences do notwithstanding so often *recoil* upon us, and alarm us with such dismal Abodings; what will they do hereafter when all those Pleasures are *removed*, and all those Self-delusions *baffled* with which we were wont to sooth and divert them; Then doubtless we shall be continually stung with sharp and dire Reflections, and our Consciences like tragick Scenes be all hung round with the Ensigns of Horror; then shall the dread of God perpetually haunt us like a grim Fury, and the Terror of his offended Majesty strike us into an everlasting Trembling and Agony. For so St. *James* tells us, that *the Devils themselves do believe and tremble*, Jam. ii. 19. they believe that there is an Almighty Being above them, and are conscious that they are in actual Rebellion against him, which makes them horribly afraid of his Vengeance; and yet such is the

the inveterate Devilishness of their Natures, that they will by no means hearken to a Submission, but in Despight of their own Dread and Horrour do still persist in an open Defiance to their Almighty Enemy, and so tremble and sin, and sin and tremble for ever. And so shall we, if we go into the other World habitual Rebels to God; our deep and inveterate Malice against him will still hurry us on to *incense* and *provoke* him, and then our natural *Dread* of his Power and Majesty will break into *frightful* and *horrible* Thoughts, and so be continually revenging upon us those our continual Provocations of him. For then our Soul will be nakedly exposed to the Lash of its own *furious* Thoughts, and have no Shield to defend itself against the Terrors of its *guilty* Conscience, which being roused up and kept awake by the *unintermitting* Sense of our Misery, will be always *clamouring* upon us, and continually *torturing* us with black and horrid Reflections. So that whilst we are wandering among *wretched* Ghosts, through those *dismal* Shades below, we shall be perpetually meditating *Horrours*, and never leave lashing ourselves with our own *sharp* and *terrible* Thoughts, till we have chafed ourselves into *Furies*, and boiled up our self-condemning Rage into an everlasting Madness. Thus as our Sense of our *Unlikeness* to God will ever fill us with *Shame* and *Confusion*. so will the Sense of our *Rebellion* against him continually strike us into *Fear* and *Amazement*.

To prevent which, our holy Religion, which doth so industriously consult our Happiness, requires us now to *submit ourselves to God*, James iv. 7.

to live to God; Gal. ii. 19. to present ourselves living Sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, Rom. xii. 1. to yield ourselves unto God, and our Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13. The Sense of all which is, that we should endeavour, so to affect our Minds with the Sense of God's Authority over us, and with the manifold Reasons of our Obedience to him, as to be firmly and constantly resolved within ourselves, neither to *chuse* any thing that he *forbids*, nor to *refuse* any thing that he *commands*; that we should set him up a Throne in our Hearts, a *fixt* and *prevailing* Resolution of Obedience, that therein he may sit and reign, and have the absolute Empire and Command of all our inward Motions, and outward Actions; in a word, that we should acquire such an habitual Respect to, and Reverence of his Sovereign Authority, that no Temptation from *within* or *without* us, may be able to countermand it, or to seduce us from our Duty into any wilful course of Rebellion against him. And when once we have framed our Minds into this obediential Temper, we are in a forward preparation for Heaven. And though by reason of those Remains and Reliques of corrupt Nature that are in us, which are here continually excited by the many Temptations among which we live, we may find *reluctant* and *counter-striving* Principles within us; a *stubborn* Appetite contending against an *obedient* Will, and sometimes upon *Surprise* or *Inadvertence* over-powering it; yet if we heartily *bewail* this as our Unhappiness, and if when we thus fall we *weep* and *rise again*, and take *more* care of our Steps for the future, we shall

carry with us when we go from hence into the other World a Will that is habitually *resigned* to God ; and so being there removed from all the Temptations that were wont to excite in us those contrary Appetites and Inclinations, we shall immediately become *all* Duty and Obedience, and freely give up ourselves to God without the least Shadow of *Contest*, or *Reluctancy*. And in this blessed State we shall continue for ever so *intirely* devoted to God, that between him and us there shall ever be one common Will, and End, and Interest ; and our Hearts, which before were in a *great Measure* set and tuned to the Heart of God, will be instantly such *perfect Unisons* with it, that whensoever, or whatsoever he speaks, we shall still *resound* and *eccho* to him, from our inmost Bowels, with unspeakable Chearfulness and Alacrity.

And being thus reduced to a perfect *Submission* to the Will of God, we shall therein find our selves incomparably happy. For now our Wills being always determined by the Will of God, we shall be perfectly eased of all the *Trouble* and *Distraction* of chusing. Now our Minds, will no longer hover in *Suspence*, nor be divided between *contrary* Reasons, but all its Thoughts will glide gently on in a calm and even current, without ever being tossed and bandied to and fro by *cross* and *opposite* Deliberations. For now it no sooner knows the Will of God, but it rests in it immediately with a *free Assent*, and *uncontrolled* Approbation ; so that upon *new* Occasions it is free from the Trouble of forming *new* Choices and Resolutions, being already fixed, under all Events, to one
steady

steady Courſe of Motion, and *immovably* reſolved, whatever befalls, ever to do what God, would have it. And its Will thus perfectly acquieſcing in God, as in its proper Place and Element, it will no longer diſpute, as it was wont to do, no longer waver between two Loadſtones, but always obey upon the firſt Motion, and follow him for ever without Deliberation. In which happy ſtate we ſhall be no longer ground between thoſe *countermoving* Millſtones, *the law in our Minds*, and *the law in our Members*, but being intirely *reſigned* to God we ſhall ever obey him *ſecundo flumine*, with a full Current of Inclination, and Nature. And what a mighty Eaſe muſt this be to the Soul; eſpecially conſidering that by being thus entirely ſubject to God, it will not only be releaſed from the *Trouble* of chuſing and deliberating, but alſo throughly warranted of the *Goodneſs* and *Reſtitution* of its own Choice. For ſo far as we are ſubject unto God *our Wills* are *his*, and ſo are our Actions too; and whiſt they are ſo, we can have no reaſon to miſtruſt, either that they are *bad* in themſelves, or that he is *angry* and *diſpleaſed* at them. For his Will we know is governed by his Nature, which is the *Standard* of Good and Evil, the *Law* and *Meaſure* of Right or Wrong; ſo that while we *will* and *aſt* as he would have us, we have a ſufficient Warrant for what we do; a Warrant that will for ever *bear us out*, and *juſtify* us to our own Minds, and always render us abundantly *ſatiſfied* with ourſelves; ſo that we ſhall not only always *acquit*, but always *reverence* ourſelves, and our Conſcience will not only ceaſe to *ſhame* us, but be continually *applauding* and *ſmiling* upon

us; and instead of those importunate *Clamours* with which it was wont to entertain us, its constant eccho to all our Actions will be, *Well done good and profitable Servant*. So that being entirely determined by the will of God, which never varies from the Law of his Nature, we shall be perfectly *satisfied* with ourselves, and for ever *chuse* and *aet* without the least *Mistrust* or *Hesitance*. And then our Wills being perfectly subject to his, and all our Powers of Action entirely at his Devotion, we shall never have the least ground to fear or suspect his *Displeasure*, but be always fully satisfied that he *loves* us, that we are *dear* and *precious* in his Eyes, and that to Eternity he will *respect* and *look upon* us with the Smiles of an unchangeable Complacency. The sense of which will ravish our Hearts, and for ever fill us *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, So that whereas rebellious Souls are perpetually haunted with two restless Furies, *viz.* the *Shame* of their *Guilt* and the *Fear* of their *Danger*, which even here do give them more *disturbance* than all their Sins can *Pleasure* and *Delights*; when once we are perfectly *subjected* to God, we shall be for ever discharged of them *both*, and then will our happy Minds be always as *courageous* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence itself.

And as by our perfect *Submission* to God, we shall be wholly released from the *trouble* of chusing, and sufficiently warranted in our own *Choices*, so we shall be abundantly *satisfied* both of the Wisdom and Success of them. For then we shall be assured, even by a sweet and happy Experience that whatsoever God commands us to
do,

do, he most certainly knows that it is for our good, and that *that* is the Reason why he commands it. So that when we are entirely *subjected* to God, our Choices and Actions will be all directed by an infallible Wisdom to our own Good. For while we chuse what God would have us, our Wills are guided by God's Wisdom, and so in every genuine Act of Obedience we are as *infallible* as Omniscience itself. When therefore we are perfectly *resigned* to God, we shall always will and act with as much *Confidence* and *Assurance* of a happy and prosperous Success, as if we our selves were infinitely wise, and had a perfect Comprehension of all possible Issues and Events. And whilst wretched Rebels grope about under the Conduct of their own blind Wills, and for the most part do they know not *what*, and go they know not *where* themselves, but live by *chance*, and act *at random*; our Wills and Actions being wholly steered by an All-wise Will, that never fails to measure them by the best Rules, and point them to the best Ends, we shall be always sure of our Hands, and know infallibly before-hand that every thing we *will* or *do* shall conspire to our own good. And this will enable us to perform the everlasting Race of our Obedience, with an unspeakable Freedom and Alacrity, and always render us wondrous light, and nimble, and expedite in our Operations. For whereas when Men know not what may happen upon such an Action, and are not able to pry out all those hidden Events, that lurk in the Womb of their own Designs, they always act with *Caution* and *Anxiety*, and are *doubtful* and *tremulous* in their Motions; when
once

once we are sure of a good Event, we still go on with Courage, and Chearfulness; and so we shall ever do, when we ever perfectly *will* and *act* under the Command of God. For now we shall always see good Issues before us, and be firmly assured from that infallible Wisdom which governs *his* Will, and by his *ours*, that every thing we will or do shall be crowned with a happy Effect. And this will for ever wing our Souls with an unwearied Vigour and Activity, and render each act of our Obedience unspeakably *sweet* and *delightful* to us. And now, O blessed Mind! what Tongue or Thought can reach thy Happiness; who living in a most perfect Subjection to an All-good and All-wise Will, art never in the least concerned or troubled to *debate* and *deliberate* what to chuse, but dost everlastingly embrace and follow what an infinite Goodness, and an infinite Wisdom hath *chosen* for thee!

VI. As we are reasonable Creatures related to God, we are also obliged chearfully to *trust in*, and *depend upon* him. For as he is the Prop and Center of all the mouldering Creation, the Almighty *Atlas*, that bears it upon his Shoulders, and keeps it from sinking into Ruin, we and every Creature in Heaven and Earth do hang upon him, and draw our Breath from him, and if he shake us off but for a Moment, we presently drop into nothing and perish. For could we exist of ourselves this *present* Moment, we might as well have done so the Moment *before*, and may as well do so the Moment *after*, and so backwards and forwards to all Eternity; and unless we had such a Fulness of Essence in us, as to exist of ourselves from

from all Eternity past to all Eternity to come, it is impossible we should exist so much as one *moment* without new Supplies from the infinite and independent Fountain of Being. And what can be more fit or reasonable than that we, who are thus borne up by him, should freely *trust in*, and *depend upon* him ; than that we should build our Hope upon the Prop of our Existence; and make him the Stay of our Confidence, in whom *we live and move and have our being*? Especially considering what a proper Object of Trust and Dependence he is ; and that not only as he is the Sovereign Disposer of all those Issues and Events which concern us, but also as he is infinitely wise, and always understands what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, and as he stands engaged both by his own *essential* Goodness, and *free* Promise, never to fail those that put their Trust in him, but to manage all their Affairs to their everlasting Interest and Advantage. And in whom can we more rationally *confide* than in a Being of infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Power ; that always *knows* what is best for us, that always *wills* what he *knows* so, and always *does* what he *wills*? All which considered, it is certainly incomparably more to our Interest and Advantage, that our Concerns should lie in his Hands, and be managed as he sees best, than that every thing should happen to us according to our own Will and Desire. For there are innumerable things which in the natural Series and Order of Causes are *concomitant* and *consequent* to every Event, the greatest part of which are out of the Sphere of our Cognizance; by reason of which it is impossible for us to make an
infal-

infallible Judgment of the *Good* or *Evil* of any Event that befalls us ; because though we may be secure that such an Event *singly* and *apart* by itself may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet for all we know there may be such Concomitants, or Consequents inseparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and render that *evil*, which considered *singly* may be good for us, or that *good* which considered *singly* may be evil. We earnestly wish for such an Event, and are very confident it would be mighty advantageous to us ; but alas ! if *it* should befall us, according to the Series of things a thousand *others* must, and what they will prove we are not able to prognosticate ; but for all we know, the Mischief of *them* may abundantly outweigh the Benefit of *this*. And this being so, how extremely unfit are we to make Choices for ourselves, since in most Particulars it is almost an equal Lay whether what we chuse will prove our *Food* or our *Poison* ? But now God being the supreme Orderer and Disposer of things, and having the *first* Link of every Chain of Causes in his own Hands, must needs have an intire Comprehension of all the *intermediate* ones, from the Beginning to the End ; and his Power being not only the Cause of all *actual* Events, but also of the *Possibilities* of those that shall never be actual, he must needs discern the utmost Issues and Concomitants of every *possible*, as well as of every *future* Event, and perfectly understand not only what *will* be beneficial or injurious to us, but also what *might* be so. So that it is impossible for him to be mistaken in his Choices, because he knows as well before-hand what things *would* be to us if they

were,

were, as what they *are* when they do *actually* exist. Upon the whole therefore it is doubtless of inestimable Advantage to us, to be in the hands of God; and verily next to Hell itself, I know nothing that is more formidable than for God to let us alone, and give us up to our own Wills and Desires. And should he call to us from Heaven, and tell us, that he was resolved to cross our Desires no more, but to comply with all our Wishes, let the Event prove good or bad, we shall have just Reason to look upon ourselves as the most *forlorn* and *abandoned* Creatures on this side Hell, as Persons excluded from the greatest Blessing that belongs to a Creature; and if we had any hope of his re-acceptance of us, it would be infinitely our Interest to resign back ourselves, and all our Concerns to him, and on our bended Knees to beseech him above all things not to leave us to *ourselves*, or throw us from *his* Care and Conduct. It being therefore upon all Accounts so highly fit and reasonable, and so much to our Interest and Advantage, that we should freely *trust* ourselves, and all our Affairs into the hands of God, and *depend* upon him for the good Success of all our honest Endeavours and Undertakings; that we should acquiesce in his Disposal of things, and under all outward Events be pleased and satisfied with his Conduct, as knowing that howsoever things may happen to us, they cannot be otherwise than as the wise and good God is pleased either to permit, or to order and determine them; this, I say, being so fit in itself, and so much for our Interest, it is impossible that without it we can be happy either here or hereafter. For since both our Being and Well-being
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are wholly dependent on the Will of God, and we can neither *be*, nor be happy one moment longer than he pleases, how is it possible we should ever be *quiet*, and *satisfied* in our Minds without a great *Assurance* of, and *Confidence* in him? When we consider what a mighty Stake we have in his Hands, how all our Fortunes lie at his Feet, and how easily he can frown us into *nothing*, or spurn us into a Condition ten thousand times *worse* than nothing whenever he pleases, how can we be otherwise *secure* in our own Minds, or avoid being externally *anxious* and *solicitous*, but by firmly *relying* on his Truth and Goodness; to the want of which is to be attributed all that *carking* Care, *tormenting* Fear, and *disquieting* Thoughtfulness, which perpetually haunts the Minds of Men. They are sensible that their Condition is dependent, and that it is not in their own Power. either to make it what they would have it, or to secure and continue it when it is made so; they know that by a thousand Chances, which in despite of their Foresight or Power may happen, the next moment either themselves may be snatched from what they possess, or what they possess may be snatched from them; they find that their most probable Designs are liable to innumerable Miscarriages, and that when they have formed their Projects never so wisely, there are infinite cross Accidents may intercur and dash them in pieces; and in this uncertain State of their Affairs, they either think not of God at all, but live at the Courtesy of a fickle Chance, and leave themselves to be tossed, and bandied to and fro at the Pleasure of a blind and undesigning Fortune,

Fortune, upon whose ever-moving Wheel their wearied Thoughts can never rest ; or if they think of God, it is with great *Mistrust* and *Despondency* ; they fear he will not be regardful enough of them, nor prove so kind to them as they could wish, and are possess'd with an obstinate Opinion that it would be much better for them to be their own Carvers, than to live at his Disposal and Allowance. And hence proceed all those Anxieties and Discontents, those *fretting* Cares, *dismaying* Fears, *perplexing* and *misgiving* Thoughts, which do continually gaul and disquiet them ; and from these their thorny Disquietudes it is impossible they should ever be wholly free, no not in Heaven itself, till they have wrought their Minds to a perfect *Trust* and *Confidence* in God. For we shall be altogether as dependent upon God for our *heavenly*, as we are for our *earthly* Happiness ; because, though all those Acts of heavenly Virtue, in which our heavenly Happiness consists, will be much *more* in our own Power, than any of these worldly Goods are, yet they will be no *longer* in our Power than God shall think fit to enable us to chuse, and act, and to support us in our Being and Existence, which then we shall sensibly perceive entirely depends upon the All-unlivening Vigour of his vital Breath. And therefore though he hath *promised* to continue our Being in that most blessed State for ever, yet unless we perfectly *trust* in his Veracity, our Minds will be continually disturbed with anxious and misgiving Thoughts ; we shall be afraid lest one time or other he should forget his Promise, and upon some unknown Reason or Emergency withdraw from us that Influence of his

his All-upholding Power, upon which our Being and Well-being depends, and let us drop into Nothing. And the *greater* our Happiness is, the *more* we should *be* afraid of losing it; because we should be always sensible that it entirely depends upon the Pleasure of God, whose Truth and Goodness we cannot perfectly *confide* in. So that were we placed in the midst of Heaven with a *misgiving, distrustful* Mind of God, *that* would imbitter all the Joys of it, and give them a harsh and ungrateful Farewel. For the *fearful* Apprehensions we should continually have of being thrust out of Heaven again, and tumbled headlong from all our Glory, would be such a *continual* Affliction to us, that we should even *pine away* our happy Eternity, for fear of being eternally deprived of it. So impossible it is for any dependent Being to be happy, without an entire *Trust* and *Confidence* in God upon whom its Being and Happiness depends.

And therefore the Gospel, to render our future Happiness compleat, endeavours to train us up before-hand, to a firm and perfect *Confidence* in God, by making it an essential part of our Duty to *commit the keeping of our Souls to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *to trust in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *not to trust in ourselves, but in God, who raised the dead*, 2 Cor. i. 9. *to believe in God*, and not to be troubled at any Events which happen to us in this World, *John* xiv. 1. and *not to cast away our confidence*, Heb. x. 35. and the like; the Sense of all which is, to press and engage us to a constant and chearful *Reliance* upon God, and to endeavour
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to affect our Minds with a deep Sense of his over-ruling Providence, and a full Assurance of the Goodness of all those great Designs he is driving on in the World; and accordingly to *acquiesce* in, and *embrace* all Events as the Tokens of his Love and Favour, and always to live upon this Persuasion, that it is infinitely better for us to be in God's Hands than in our own, and that he knows much better how to dispose of us and our Affairs than we do, and that he will take care to dispose of them as much to our Advantage as we ourselves should, if *we* knew as much as *he* doth. Now though by Reason of those strong Impressions which sensible Things in this Life of Sense make upon us, we should not always be able so firmly to *rely* upon, and *repose* ourselves in God's invincible Power, as not to be at all disquieted about the Issues and Events of Things; yet if by frequent Acts of *Trust* and *Reliance* on him, we have so disposed our Minds to *confide* in him, as that by looking up to his over-ruling Providence, we can *ordinarily* stay and support ourselves, amidst the Changes and Revolutions of this World; if when a Storm of Adversity hangs lowring over, or showers down upon us, we can fly to God for shelter, and promise ourselves Safety and Protection under the out-stretched Wings of his Providence; in a Word, if when we smart, we can *ordinarily* hope in him, and rest persuaded that under his gracious Conduct and Disposal, all Things shall work together for our Good; this our *imperfect, wavering* Hope and Dependance, shall in the other Life be immediately ripened into a most perfect *Confidence*, and *Assurance*, For there we

shall be wholly removed from this Life of Sense, by which our *Trust* in God's invisible Providence is very much *weakned* and *distracted*; and besides we shall have much *quicker* Apprehensions of his Nature, and of the infinite Reasons we have to *confide* in him. And then when after all the Threats of a tempestuous Voyage, we shall find ourselves landed in a blessed World, and possessed of all its promised Glories, this mighty *Experiment* of God's Fidelity and Goodness will immediately settle our predisposed Minds, into such an immoveable *Confidence* in him, as that from thenceforth no *Fear* or *Distrust* will ever find the least access to our Thoughts, but we shall be so perfectly assured of his Truth and Goodness, that though we shall feel ourselves sustained and blessed every Moment by the arbitrary Influences of his Benignity and Power, yet we shall be as *confident* for ever of the continuance of our Bliss, as we could be, if we did *self-exist*, and held the Eternity of our Being and Happiness as independently as God doth *his*. For though our Condition will be ever *dependent*, yet it will be ever dependent upon such a Foundation as can no more fail than God's own Life and Being; *viz.* upon his Veracity and Goodness, both which are so essential to him, as that he cannot exist without them. And knowing ourselves so firmly secured in this our dependent State, as that we can never sink unless God himself sink under us, we shall be to all Eternity not only as *safe*, but as *satisfied* in it, as if we were every one a God to himself; and in this blessed Security we shall quietly enjoy God and ourselves for ever. So that our *Trust* and *Confidence* in
God

God will crown the Pleasure of all our other Virtues, by giving us full Security of an everlasting Fruition of it. For now the ravished Mind will have no *Fear* or *Distrust* to cramp or arrest it, in its blessed Operations; no *anxious* Thoughts of a sad Futurity to sour its present Enjoyments; but it will enjoy *all* Heaven every Moment, in a fearless Security of enjoying it *all* for ever. And when it shall perfectly *love*, *contemplate* and *adore* God, with a sure and certain *Confidence*, of *Contemplating*, *loving* and *adoring* him perfectly for ever, O! how unspeakably will this enhance the Pleasure of those beatifical Acts! For now in every Moment of all our blessed Eternity, we shall still have the Joy of a blessed Eternity to come; and besides all those Pleasures which each present Moment of our heavenly Life shall abound with, we shall still have the Pleasure of a Prospect of infinite Ages of Pleasure. And thus the blessed Mind, you see, by its perfect *Dependance* upon God, consummates its own Heaven, and secures itself for ever in a most quiet and undisturbed Enjoyment of it.

By all which I think it sufficiently appears, how much each of these *Divine Virtues*, which as rational Creatures we are obliged to exert, and exercise upon *God*, contributes to our heavenly Happiness; and consequently how indispensably necessary our present Practice of them is to *dispose* and *capacitate* us to enjoy it.

S E C T. III

Concerning the Social Virtues, shewing that these also are included in the heavenly Part of the Christian Life, and that in their Natures they very much contribute to our heavenly Happiness.

MAN of all sublunary Creatures is the most adapted for *Society*. For though the greatest Part of other Creatures do *covet* Society, as well as he, yet *he* alone is furnished with that Gift of Nature which renders Society most *pleasant* and *useful*, and that is the Gift of *Speech*. By means of which we can express our Thoughts, and maintain a mutual Intelligence of Minds, with one another; and thereby divert our Sorrows, mingle our Mirth, impart our Secrets, communicate our Counsels, and make mutual Compacts and Agreements, to supply and assist each other. And in these Things consists the greatest *Use* and *Pleasure* of Society. And as of all Creatures we are the best *fitted* for Society, so we stand in the greatest *need* of it. For as for other Creatures, after they come into the World they are much *sooner* able to help themselves than *we*; and after we are most able to help ourselves, there are a World of Necessaries and Conveniences *without* which we cannot be happy, and *with* which we cannot be supplied without each other's Aid and Assistance? which in an *unsociable* State of Life we should of all Creatures in the World be the most indisposed to render to one another. For as *Aristotle de Repub. lib. 1. pag. 298.* hath observed,

observed, Ὡς περ γὰρ τελειωθὲν βέλτιστον τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ἔτι καὶ χωρισθὲν νόμου καὶ δίκης χεῖριστον πάντων. As Man in his perfect State is the best of all Animals, so separated from Law and Right he is the worst. For out of Society we see his Nature presently degenerates, and instead of being inclined to assist, grows always most salvage barbarous to his own kind. Since therefore we have so much need of each other's help, Society is absolutely necessary to cherish and preserve in us our natural Benevolence towards one another, without which, instead of being mutually *helpful*, we should be mutually *mischievous*. For as the same Philosopher hath observed, Ὁ δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν, ἢ μὴθὲν δεόμενος δι' αὐτάρκειαν. οὐθὲν μέρους πόλεως, ὥς ἐστὶν θηρίον, ἢ θεός. *Id. Ibid.* He that cannot contract Society with others, or through his own Self-sufficiency doth not need it, belongs not to any Commonwealth, but is either a wild Beast, or a God. We being therefore so framed for Society, and under such Necessities of entering into it, it hence necessarily follows, that being *associated* together, we are all obliged in our several Ranks and Stations so to behave ourselves towards one another as is most for the *common Good* of All; and that since the Happiness of each *particular* Member of our Society redounds from the Welfare of the *Whole*, and is involved in it, we ought to esteem nothing good for *ourselves* that is a Nuisance to the *Publick*. Because whatsoever *this* suffers, I and every Man suffer; and unless I could be happy *alone*, that can never be for my Interest in *particular*, that is against my Interest

in *common*. Now in such a mutual Behaviour as most conduces to our common Benefit and Happiness, as we are in Society with one another, consists all *social Virtue*; the proper Use and Design of which is to preserve our Society with one another, and to render it a common Blessing to us all. And hereunto five things are necessary, *viz.*

1. That we be *charitably* disposed towards one another.

2. That we be *just* and *righteous* in all our Inter-courses with each other.

3. That we behave ourselves *peaceably* in our respective States and Relations.

4. That we be very *modest* towards those that are *Superior* to us in our Society, whether it be in Desert or Dignity.

5. That we be very *treatable* and *condescending* to all that are *Inferior* to us. Under these Particulars are comprehended all those *social Virtues* upon which the Welfare and Happiness of Human Society depends. Now that the Practice of all these is included in the *Christian Life*, and doth effectually conduce to our everlasting Happiness, I shall endeavour particularly to prove. And

1. As rational Creatures *associated* and so related to one another, we are obliged to be *kindly* and *charitably* disposed towards each other. For the end of our Society being mutually to *aid* and *assist* one another; it is necessary, in order hereunto, that we should every one be *kind* and *benevolent* to every one, that so we may be continually inclined mutually to aid and do good Offices to one another.

another. And so far as we fall short of *this*, we fall short of the End of our Society. For to be sure the less we *love* one another, the less prone we shall be to *promote* and *further* each other's Welfare, and consequently the less Advantage we shall reap from our mutual Society, But if instead of *loving*, we *malign* and *hate* each other, our Society will be so far from contributing to our Happiness, that it will be only a Means of rendring us more *miserable*. For it will only furnish us with fairer Opportunities of doing *Mischief* to one another, and that mutual Intercourse we shall have by being united together in Society will supply us with greater Means and Occasions to wreak our *Spight* upon each other. For Society puts us within each other's reach, and by that Means (if we are Enemies) renders us more *dangerous* to one another; like two adverse Armies, which when they are at a Distance can do but little hurt, but when they are joined and mingled never want Opportunities to destroy and butcher one another. So that *Hatred* and *Malice*, you see, renders our Society a Plague, and we were much better live *apart* poorly and solitarily, and withdraw from one another, as Beasts of Prey do into their separate Dens, than continue in one another's reach, and be always liable, as we must be while we are in Society, to be *baited* and *worried* by one another.

And as *Hatred* and *Malice* spoils all our Society in *this* Life, and renders it worse than the most dismal Solitude, so it will also in the *other*. For whensoever the Souls of Men do leave their Bodies, they doubtless flock to the Birds of their

own Feather, and comfort themselves with such separate Spirits as are of their own Genius and Temper. For besides that good and bad Spirits are by the eternal Laws of the other World distributed into two *separate* Nations, and there live *apart* from one another, having no other Communication or Intercourse but what is between two hostile Countries that are continually designing and attempting one against another; so that when wicked Souls do leave this terrestrial Abode and pass into Eternity, they are presently incorporated by the Laws of that invisible State into the Nation of wicked Spirits, and confined for ever to their most wretched Society and Converse; besides this, I say, *Likeness* doth naturally *congregate* Beings, and incline them to associate with those of their own Kind. Now *Rancour* and *Malice* is the proper Character of the Devil, and the natural Genius of Hell; and consequently it is by a malicious Temper of Mind that we are *naturalized* before-hand Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness, and qualified for the Conversation of Furies. So that when we go from hence into Eternity, this our *malignant* Genius will render us utterly averse to the *friendly* Society of Heaven, and naturally press and incline us to consort with that wretched Nation of *spightful* and *rancorous* Spirits, with whom we are already joined by a Likeness and Communion of Natures. But O! much better were it for us to be shut up all alone for ever in some dark Hole of the World, where we might converse only with our own melancholy Thoughts, and never hear of any other being but ourselves, than to be continually plagued with

with such vexatious Company! For though we who are Spectators only of *Corporeal* Action, cannot discern the Manner how one Spirit acts upon another; yet there is no doubt but *spiritual* Agents can strike as immediately upon Spirits, as *bodily* Agents can upon Bodies; and supposing that these can mutually act upon one another, there is no more doubt but they can mutually make each other feel each other's *Pleasures* and *Displeasures*, and that according as they are more or less *powerful*, they can more or less *aggrieve* and *afflict* one another. And if so, what can be expected from a Company of *spightful* and *malicious* Spirits joined in Society together, but that their Conversation should be a continual Intercourse of mutual *Mischiefs* and *Vexations*? especially considering how they *here* laid the Foundation of an eternal Quarrel against one another. For *there* all those Companions in Sin will meet, who by their ill *Counsels*, wicked *Insinuations*, and bad *Examples* did mutually contribute to each other's Ruin; and being met in such a *woful* State, how will the tormenting Sense of those irreparable Injuries they have done each other, whet their *Fury* against, and incite them to *play the Devils* with one another? And what can be expected from such a Company of *waspish* Beings, so implacably incensed against one another, but that being shut up together in the infernal Den, they should be perpetually *bissing* at, and *stinging* each other: But then besides those mutual Plagues which these furious Spirits must be supposed to inflict upon one another, they will be also nakedly exposed to the powerful Malice of the *Devils*, those fierce

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Executioners of God's righteous Vengeance, who, as we now find by Experience, have Power to suggest *black* and *horrid* Thoughts to us, and to *torture* our Souls with such dreadful Imaginations as are far more sharp and exquisite than any *bodily* Torments. And if *now* they have such Power over us, when God thinks fit to let them loose; what will they have *hereafter*, when our wretched Spirits shall be wholly abandoned to their Mercy, and they shall have free Scope to exercise their Fury upon us, and glut their *hungry* Malice with our Grievs and Vexations? It seems at least a mighty probable Notion, that *that* horrid Agony of our Saviour in the Garden, which caused him to shriek and groan, and sweat as it were great Drops of Blood, was chiefly the effect of those *preternatural* Terrors, which the Devils, with whom he was then contesting, *impressed* upon his innocent Mind. And if they had so much Power over his *pure* and *mighty* Soul, that was so strongly guarded with the most *perfect* and *unspotted* Virtues, what will they have over ours when we are abandoned to them, and thrown as Preys into their Mouths? With what a hellish Rage will they fly upon our *guilty* and *timorous* Souls in which there is so much Tinder for their injected Sparks of Horror to take fire on?

Since therefore *Rancour* and *Malice* doth so naturally incline and hurry our Souls towards the wretched Society of Devils and damned Spirits, the Gospel, which so industriously consults our Happiness, takes all possible Care to train us up in *Charity* and mutual *Love*; and makes it a principal, as well as necessary Part of our *Christian* Life,

Life, heartily to love one another. For this, as our Saviour tells us, is the darling Precept which lay next to his Heart, *this is my Commandment, that ye love one another*, John xv. 12. And accordingly we are bid not only to follow after Charity, 1 Cor. xiv. 1. and to do all things with Charity, 1 Cor. xvi. 14. but also to put on Charity above all things, Col. iii. 14. and to dwell in love, which, the Apostle tells us, is to dwell in God who is love, 1 Joh. iv. 16. The intent of all which is, to oblige us to bear an universal good Will to all. and to take an hearty Complacency in all that are truly lovely; to be ready to contribute to and rejoice in every one's Good and Welfare, and in a Word, to live in the continual exercise of all those charitable Offices which our present State and Condition requires and calls for. To be courteous and affable, and to treat all those we converse with, with an obliging Look, a genteel Deportment, and endearing Language. To be long-suffering, mild and easie to be entreated; not to break forth into Rage and Storm upon every petty Provocation, and when we are justly provoked, not to suffer our Displeasure to fester into Malice and Rancour, but to be forward and easie to be reconciled. To be of a compassionate and sympathizing Temper, and to rejoice with those that rejoice, and weep with those that weep. To be candid Interpreters of Men and their Actions; to be ready to mitigate and excuse their Faults, and put fair Comments on their Actions; and to be so far from making malicious Glosses on their innocent Meaning, from proclaiming their Miscarriages and rejoicing in their Falls, as not to believe ill of them but upon undeniable Evidence; and when

we are forced to do so, *to pity and lament them, and endeavour, and pray, and hope for their Reformation.* In short, to be *benign and bountiful* to the necessitous and distressed, and to endeavour according to our Ability to allay their Sorrows, remove their Oppressions, support them under their Calamities, and counsel them in their Doubts; to be ready to every good Work, and like Fields of Spices to be scattering our Perfumes through all the Neighbourhood; and all this out of an *honest and sincere* purpose to promote their Good, and not meerly to acquire to ourselves a popular Vogue and Reputation. All which are essential Parts of that Charity which the Gospel enjoins us to exercise towards one another. For so the Apostle assures us, 1 Cor, xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, Charity envieth not, Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Now though there be several Acts of Charity that will cease for ever in Heaven, such as *long-suffering, giving of Alms, and forgiving of Injuries,* and the like; because among the People of Heaven there will be none of the Faults or Miseries about which *these* Acts are conversant; yet even the Practice of *these* is indispensably necessary to *temper and dispose* our Minds to heavenly Charity, which till we are *disposed to* by universal Love, we shall never be capable of *exercising*; but since all virtuous Dispositions are acquired by Acts, it is
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impossible we should acquire the Disposition of universal Love, unless we universally practise it. 'Tis by *giving Alms* that we must acquire cordial Charity to the *poor* and *needy*; and by *forgiving Injuries* that we must dispose ourselves to love those that *offend* us. For these Acts are *Causes* as well as *Signs* of a charitable Temper, and are necessary not only to *signifie* it where it is, but alio to *produce* it where it is *not*. When therefore by acting all those Parts of Charity which are proper to *this* as well as the *other* State, we have acquired this blessed Disposition of *universal Charity*, our Minds are fairly *framed* and *tempered* for the Society of Heaven. And though in the perpetual Justice and Tumult of this World some little *Piques* and *Displeasures* should now and then arise in our Minds, yet if in the *cool* and *standing* Temper of our Souls we are hearty Well-wishers to all Men, and hearty Lovers of all that do in any measure *love* and *resemble* God, we are in a natural Tendency to Heaven, that perfect Element of Love, and when we go from hence shall consort ourselves with unspeakable Joy and Alacrity with those *great* and *blessed* Lovers that inhabit it. Who being all of them most amiable and Godlike Souls, that are every one of the same Temper with ourselves, being touched at the same Loadstone, and made Partakers of the same Divine Nature, we shall immediately close and join with them in the strictest Unions of Love. For those Heavenly People being all of them most *flagrant* Lovers of God, are so united in Him who is the common *Center* of Love, that no Saint or Angel can enjoy *his* Love without possessing a proportionate Degree

gree of *theirs*; and their Love of one another being all *subordinate* to their common Love to God, and *grounded* upon it; though their strongest Inclination, like that of *excited* Needles, be still towards *him* the blessed Magnet at which they have every one been touched, yet do they all *stick fast* to one another, being *clung* inseparably together by those attractive Virtues which they have all derived from him, And in this state of perfect *Friendship* they converse together with unspeakable Pleasure, and all their Conversation is a perpetual Intercourse of *wise* and *holy* Endearments. And now what a blessed Society must this be, wherein perfect *Love* and *Friendship* reigns, and hath an All-commanding Empire; where every Heart *mingles* with every one, and all like precious Dusts of Gold, are melted together into one solid Ingot; where infinite Myriads of blessed Spirits, by interchangeably *clasping* and *twining* with one another, are so inseparably *united* and *grown together*, that they are all but one *compounded* Soul! And when from the highest Angel to the lowest Saint they are all so *tied* together by the Heart-strings; that every one is every one's *dear* Friend, what inexpressible *Content* and *Complacency* must they needs take in one another! When I shall pass all Heaven over through ten thousand Millions of blessed Beings, and meet none but such as I most dearly *love*, and am as dearly *beloved* by. O! what unspeakable Rejoicing and Congratulations will there be between us! especially when I shall find no Defect either of Goodness or Happiness in *them*, nor they in *me*, to damp our mutual Joy and Delight in each other; but every one shall be what
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every one wishes him, a *perfect* and a *blessed* Friend. For perfect Lovers have all their *Joys* and *Griefs* in common between them; but the Heavenly Lovers having no *Griefs* among them, do only communicate their *Joys* to one another. For where they love so perfectly as they do in Heaven, there can be no such thing as a *private* or *particular* Happiness, but every one must have a Share in every one's; and consequently in this their mutual Communication of *Blisses*, every one's Happiness will, by his Friendship to every one be multiplied into as many Happinesses as there are Saints and Angels in Heaven; and so every Joy of every Member of the Church Triumphant runs round the whole Body in an eternal *Circulation*. For that blessed Body being all composed of *consenting* Hearts, that like perfect Unisons are tuned up to the same Key, when any one is *touched*, every one *echoes* and *resounds* the same Note; and whilst they thus mutually *strike* upon each other, and *all* are affected with *every one's* Joys, it is impossible but that in a State where there is nothing but Joy, there should be a continual Consort of *ravishing* Harmony among them. For such is their dear Concern for one another, that every one's Joy not only *pays to*, but *receives* Tribute from every one's; so that when any one blessed Spirit rejoices, his Joy goes round the whole Society; and then all their rejoicings in his Joy *reflow* upon, and *swell* and *multiply* it; and so as they mutually *borrow* one another's Joys, they always *pay* them back with Interest, and by thus *reciprocating* do everlastingly *increase* them.

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II. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged to be *just* and *righteous* in all our Intercourses with each other. To yield to every one whatsoever by any Kind of Right, whether *natural* or *acquired*, he can demand or challenge of us. For there are some things to which every Man hath a Right by Nature, as he is a Part or Member of Human Society. As for instance, *Life*, which is the Principal of all our Actions and Perceptions, is freely lent us by God, who is the Source and Fountain of Life ;and consequently till God *resumes* his Loan, or we *forfeit* it by our own Actions, we have all a natural Right to *live*, and for any Man to attempt to deprive us of our Life, or of our Means of living is the highest Injury and Injustice. Again, *Words* being instituted for no other End but to signify our Meaning, and to be the Instrument of our Intercourse and Society with one another, every one who is a Member of Human Society hath a Right to have our Meaning *truly* signified to him by our Words, and whosoever *lies* or *equivocates* to another, doth thereby injuriously deprive him of the natural Right of Society. Again, a *good Name* being the Ground of Trust and Credit, and Credit the main Sinew of Society, till Men have forfeited their good Name, they have a natural Right to be *well reputed* and *spoken* of ; and whosoever either by *false* Witness, *publick* Slander, or *private* Whisperings, endeavours to attain an innocent Man's Reputation, doth thereby injuriously attempt to exclude him from the Conversation of Men, and shut the Door of Human Society against him. Once more, *Promises* being the
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great Security of our mutual Intercourse and Society with one another, every Man that hath a Right to Society hath a Right to what another *promiseth* him, provided it be but *lawful* and *possible*; and therefore for any Man to promise what he *intends* not to perform, or to *go back* from his Promise when he lawfully *may* and *can* perform it, is an Act of unjust Rapine; and I may every whit as honestly rob another Man of what is his *without* my Promise, as of what I have made his *by* it; he having an equal Right to *both* by the fundamental Laws of Society. In fine, the great Design of our Society being to *help* and *assist* one another, every Man has a Right to be *aided* and *assisted* by every one with whom he hath any Dealing or Intercourse; to have some share of the Benefit of all that Exchange, Traffick, and Commerce which passies between him and others; and therefore for any Man in his Dealings with others to take Advantage from their Necessity or Ignorance to *oppress* or *over-reach* them, or to deal so *hardly* by them as either not to allow them any share of the Profit which accrues from their Dealings, or not a *sufficient* share for them to subsist and live by, is an injurious Invasion of that natural Right which the very End and Design of Society gives them. But then besides these *natural*, there are also *acquired* Rights; and such are those which either by *legal* Constitution, or by *mutual* Compacts and Agreements we are seized and vested with: which *Constitutions* and *Compacts* being absolutely necessary to the upholding and regulating of human Societies, it is no less necessary that all those Rights which they confer should be

inviolably presented; and whosoever knowingly or wilfully takes away or detains from another what he is thus intitled to by Law or Agreement, is guilty either of a *Fraud* or a *Robbery*. either of which is an unjust Violation of the Rights of human Society. So that the Practice of *Justice* and *Righteousness*, as it is confined to human Society, consists in not intrenching either upon the *natural* or *acquired* Rights of those with whom we have any Dealing or Intercourse; in not endeavouring to deprive them either of their *Lives* or *Livelihoods*, unless by their own Actions they *forfeit* them to us; in imparing our *true* Meaning to them by our Words, and neither *hiding* it under *Lies* and *Falshoods*, nor *disguising* it with equivocal *Reservations*; in making good to them all our lawful and possible *Promises*, in not falsely aspersing their *good Names* and *Reputations*, nor suffering them to be *falsely aspersed* when we are able to vindicate them; in neither using them *cruelly* in our Dealings, so as wilfully to damnify them, nor *hardly*, so as either to take all the Advantage to ourselves, or not to allow them such a *competent* share of it as is necessary to support and maintain them: In a word, not to *defraud* or *rob* them of any thing which either by Constitution of *Law*, or by *Compact* and *Agreement* they have a Right to. This is *civil Righteousness*, and without this it is impossible that any Society should be *happy*. For how can any one be secure in a Society where *Violence* and *Rapine*, *Falshood* and *Oppression* reign; where Causes are decided, not by Rules of *Justice*, but by dint of *Power*, and the strongest Arm is the sole *Arbitrator* of *Right* and *Wrong*; where

where *Promises* and *Professions* are only *Traps* and *Snares*, and every Man lays *Ambushes* in his Words, and lurks behind them in *reserved* Meanings, only to wait an Opportunity to *surprise* and *ruin* every one he converses with? It would doubtless be far more eligible for Men to *disperse* and *disband* their Society and live *apart* as Vermin do, and subsist by *robbing* and *filching* from one another, than live together as they must in such a State of Injustice like Bundles of Briars and Thorns, and out of their mutual Jealousies and Distrusts be continually *tearing* and *scratching* one another.

Now, as I shewed you before, what Mens Tempers are *here*, such will their Company be *hereafter*. So that if we go out of this World with an *unrighteous* Temper, we must expect to be confined in the *other* to an *unrighteous* Society; and if Unrighteousness be such a *Nuisance* to our Society in this Life, what a *Plague* will it be to it in the Life to come? For the most *barbarous* Societies of Men in this Life, have some *Remains* of Justice and Equity among them; and though the *best* of them have many corrupt Members that are bad in the *main*, yet whether it be by their natural Temper, or their fear of Punishment or Disgrace, or by their Sense of Honour, or Checks of Conscience, they are frequently restrained from *many* bad things, and particularly from *Dishonesty* and *Injustice*; by which means their Society is rendered much more tolerable. But in the other Life, as they are all *perfectly* good that are in the Society of the Good, so they are all *perfectly* wicked that are in the Society of the Wicked; and whatsoever Checks there may

be in their Natures to any *particular* Acts of Wickedness, they are there *all* borne down by their inveterate Malice against God, and outrageous Despair of ever being reconciled to him. So that in all their Society with one another there is not the least Intermixture of *just* and *righteous* Intercourse, but all their Conversation is *Falshood* and *Treachery*, *Violence* and *Oppression*, and whatsoever else is *hurtful* and *injurious* to one another. For the Devil, who is the sovereign Prince of their Society, is described in Scripture to be the *Father of Lies*, and a *Murderer from the beginning*, that is, a most outrageously unjust and unrighteous Being, one whose whole Trade hath been to cheat and deceive, to rook Men of their Happiness, and mask his murderous Intentions against them with dissembled Smiles, and fawning Endearments. And doubtless *Regis ad exemplum* is true *there* as well as *here*; the miserable Vassals of his dark Kingdom do all imitate his Manners, and tread in his Footsteps. And if so, O! good Lord, what *woful* Society must they have with one another! When by reason of their continual Experience of each other's *Falshood* and *Insincerity*, 'all mutual *Trust* and *Confidence* is banished from among them, and every one is forced to stand upon his own Guard in continual expectance of *Mischief* from every one. When all their Life is a Trade of *Diabolical* Knaveries, and their whole Study is to *do* and *retaliate* Injuries, and the main Business of this their hellish Society is to *circumvent* and *play the Devils* with one another. Doubtless *this alone* is enough to make Hell a most dreadful State, though there were *nothing else* dreadful in it;

and I verily believe, if it were left to my own Option, I should much rather chuse to languish out an Eternity in some dismal Dungeon *alone*; and there converse only with my own silent Grievs, than to dwell for ever in the Garden of the World accompanied with such *false* and *villainous* Creatures.

That this therefore may not be our Fate *hereafter*, it is a great part of the Business of our holy Religion to train us up for better Company, by inuring us *beforehand* to the Practice of *Righteousness* and *Justice*. For so it obliges us *to do unto Men, whatsoever we would that Men should do unto us*, Mark vii. 12. that is, so to deal with every Man as if we had exchanged Persons with him, and he were in *our* Place, and we in *his*. And in particular it enjoins us to be *harmless as Doves, as well as wise as Serpents*, Matt. x. 16. *to converse in the World with Simplicity and Godly Sincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. *to keep up an honest Conversation in the World*. 1 Pet. ii. 12. *not to lie to one another*, Col. iii. 9. *not to go beyond or defraud our Brother in any matter*, 1 Thes. iv. 6. The Sense of all which is, to oblige us to maintain a strict *Integrity* in' all our Professions and Inter-courses with Men, and not to allow ourselves in any Course of Action which the Laws of *Justice* and *Sincerity* disapprove; to measure our *Words* by our *Meaning*, and our *Meaning*, so far as we are able, by the *Truth* and *Reality* of Things; to converse among Men with a generous *Openness* and *Freedom*, and with as little *Reserve* and *Disguise* as is possible and prudent, considering what a *treacherous* and *ill-natured* World we have to deal with; to *be* what we *seem*, and not to paint ill Meanings

with smiling Looks and smooth Pretences; to *notify* our Intentions, and *unfold* our Hearts, and, so far as innocent Prudence will admit, to turn our selves *inside outwards* to all we converse with; to give to every one his due, and not to intrench upon other Mens Rights, whether it be to their *Lives* or *Liberties*, *Reputations* or *Estates*: In a word, to weigh to our Neighbours and ourselves in the same Balance, and to do to *them* whatsoever we could reasonably wish they should do to *us*, if *we* were in *their* Persons and Circumstances. By the Practice of which excellent Rules our Mind will by Degrees be refined and purified from all Disposition to *Fraud* and *Injustice*; and then when we go from hence into Eternity we shall carry thither with us such a *just* and *righteous* Frame of Mind, such an honest *Plainness* and *Integrity* of Temper as will immediately qualify and dispose us for the Society of *just Men made perfect*, who finding us already united to them in *Disposition* and *Nature*, will joyfully receive us into their blessed Communion. And now, O! the blessed State we shall be in, when being stripped of all *Partiality* and *unjust Desire*, of all *Insincerity* and *Craftiness* of Temper, we shall be admitted into a Nation of *just* and *righteous* People, where every one has his appropriate Seat and Mansion of Glory, and is so perfectly *contented* with it that he never *covets* what another enjoys, so that every one possesses what is his own without the least Suspicion of being ejected by a *subtiller* or more *powerful* Neighbour; where being perfectly assured of each other's *Integrity*, they converse together with the greatest Openness and Freedom,

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and in all their Language, whatsoever it be, do *read* their Hearts and *convey* their Intentions to one another; where their Souls converse *Face to Face*, and do freely *unbosom* themselves to one another without the least *Disguise* or *Dissimulation*; so that in all their Society there is no such thing as a *Secret* or *Mystery*, but they are all *Bosom* Friends to one another, and every one has a Window into every one's Breast! O! blessed God, what a most *happy* Conversation must such just Souls as these enjoy with one another, from whose Society all Fraud and Falshood, Violence and Oppression is for ever banished! For whilst they live together as they do in the continual Exercise of perfect *Righteousness* and *Integrity*, they can neither design upon, nor suspect one another, and so consequently must needs converse together with infinite Security and Freedom. And being all of them thus inviolably safe in each other's *Sincerity* and *Justice*; every one enjoys his proper Rank and Degree of Glory without Fear or Disturbance, and freely communicates his *wise* and *excellent* Thoughts to every one without any Strangeness or Reserve. Thus all Heaven over there is a more perfect *Freedom* of Conversation among those *righteous* People that inhabit it, and every one is every one's *Neighbour*, and every one's Neighbour is as *Himself*. For in all their Communication and intercourse they mutually *exchange* Persons with one another, and there is no one *doth* that to another which he would not gladly have *done* to himself in the same Condition and Circumstances. So that none of them all can possibly be aggrieved because they *are* every

one dealt by just as they *would be*, most *fairly*, most *righteously* and *faithfully*. And hence there can be no *Grudges* among them, no *Whisperings*, *Back-bitings* or spiteful *Misrepresentations*, because every one likes what every one does, and so they are all perfectly satisfied with one another. And thus you see in the Exercise of perfect *Righteousness* and *Integrity* all the Society of Heaven is rendered perfectly *happy*.

III. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another* we are obliged to behave ourselves *peaceably* in our respective States and Relations. For Society being nothing but an united Multitude, it is indispensably necessary to the Preservation of its Union, that every individual Member of it should *peaceably* comport himself towards every one in that Degree and Order wherein he is placed. Because, as the Health of *natural* Bodies depends upon the Harmony and Agreement of their Parts, so doth the Prosperity of Societies or *Political* ones. For it is *Peace* and mutual *Accord* which is the Soul that doth both animate and unite Society, and keep the Parts of it from dispersing and flying abroad into Atoms, which nothing but Force and Violence can hinder them from, when once they are broken into Discords and Dissensions. So true is that of our Saviour, *A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*. For besides that Division impairs the Strength of a Society, which like an impetuous Stream being parted into several Currents runs with far less Force, and is much more easily forded ; for the several Factions that are in it are like the several Nations in a confederate Army, which though they
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be all united into one Body have several contrary Interests and Designs, which divides their Councils, and sows Jealousies among them, and so renders them not only less *able* to withstand the Force of an unanimous Enemy, but also less *willing* to aid and assist one another ; besides this, I say, Faction and Discord naturally disunites and separates Society, as it dissolves the Bond of Peace which holds it together. For a Society without Peace is but an aggregated Body whose Parts lie together in a confused Heap, but have no Joints or Sinews to fasten them to one another ; for want of which, instead of mutually assisting, they do but mutually load and oppress each other ; which must necessarily divide their *Wills* and their *Interests*, and when that is done it is only external Force that hinders them from dividing and separating their *Persons*. Upon this Account therefore every Man is obliged, as he is a Member of human Society, to comport himself *peaceably* with all Men ; because otherwise he will necessarily render himself a publick Pest and Nuisance. For so long as he is of an *unquiet* and *turbulent* Spirit, instead of being an *Help* he must necessarily be a *Disease* to every Community of which he is a Member ; and if those with whom he is joined were all of his Humour and Spirit, it would be much better for them all to live asunder in the most solitary Condition, than to continue in Society together ; because instead of *helping* and *assisting*, they would be sure to be continually *vexing* and *plaguing* one another.

If therefore we go into the other World with an *unquiet* and *quarrelsome* Temper, we shall be thereby

thereby inclined to and prepared for the most wretched and miserable Society, even the Society of those *factionous* Fiends that could not be quiet even in Heaven itself, but raised a mutiny before the Throne of God, and for so doing were driven thence, and damned to keep one another Company in endless Misery and Despair. The Souls of Men therefore being by the Laws of the invisible State always assigned to that Society of Spirits whereunto they are most connaturalized in their Temper, we must expect, if we go into Eternity with *turbulent* and *contentious* Minds, to be thrust into the Society of Devils and damned Ghosts, with whom we are already joined in a strict Communion of Natures. And O! what a *dreadful* thing must it be, to be forced to spend an Eternity in such *wretched* Company! Verily methinks the most horrid and frightful Idea I can form in my own Mind, is, that of a Company of *snarling* and *quarrelsome* Spirits, crouded like so many Scorpions and Adders into a Den together, and there forced by the Venomousness of their Temper to live in continual Mutiny, and be perpetually *bissing* and *spitting* Poison at one another. For though those Words of our Saviour, *Matt. xii. 25, 26.* imply that Satan's Kingdom is *not* divided, yet they are not to be misunderstood as if there were any such things as *Peace* or *Concord* among those rancorous Spirits, for that is impossible to be imagined; no, doubtless they *would* be divided eternally if they *could*, being such continual Plagues as they are to one another, and think it a mighty happiness to be shut up all *alone* in separate Dens, where they might never *see* nor *hear* of one another more;

more; but being chained together as they are by an adamantine Fate, which they cannot withstand, they consent in *this*, and in *this only*, to oppose all good Designs, and do the utmost Mischief they are able. But as to all their other Intercourses they are continually embroiled, and do live in an eternal Variance with one another. So that their Society is like that Monster *Scylla*, whom the Poets talk of whose inferior Parts were a company of Dogs that were perpetually snarling and quarrelling among themselves, and yet were inseparable from one another as being all of them Parts of the same Substance.

Wherefore since to be united by indissoluble Ligaments to this wretched Society will be the certain Fate of all *factionous* and *contentious* Souls, our blessed Religion, whose great Design is to advance our Happiness, hath taken abundant Care to educate our Minds in *Quietness* and *Peace*. For hither tend all those Precepts of it which require us to *follow Peace with all Men*, Heb. xii. 14. *to be at Peace among ourselves*, 1 Theff. v. 13. *to follow after the things that make for Peace*, Rom. xiv. 19. *to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*, Ephes. iv. 3. *to be of one Mind and to live in Peace*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *and if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. xii. 18. In a word, *to mark them that cause Divisions among us, and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and to do our part *that there be no Divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment*, 1 Cor. i. 10. The Design of all which is to bind us over to the Study and Practice of *Unity and Concord*, and restrain us
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by the strictest Obligations from all *schismatical*, *factious*, and *turbulent* Behaviour in those sacred or civil Societies whereof we are Members. And unless we do sincerely endeavour to fulfil these Obligations, however we may *monopolize* Godliness to our own Party, and *claw* and *canonize* one another, we are Saints of a quite different strain from those blessed ones above, and are acted by the *factious* Spirit of the Devil, whose Business it is to foment Divisions, and kindle Disturbances and Commotions where-ever he comes. This therefore must be our great Care, if we design for Heaven, to root out of our Tempers all Inclination to *Contention* and *Discord*, and to compose ourselves into a *sedate* and *peaceable*, *calm* and *gentle* Frame of Spirit; and not only to avoid all unnecessary Quarrels and Contentions *ourselves*, but so far as in us lies to be Peace-makers between *others*, and preserve a friendly Union *with* and *among* our fellow Members. And if through human *Frailty* and *Infirmity*, through our own *Ignorance*, or the plausible *Pretences* of Seducers, through the too great Prevalence of our *Worldly Interest*, or the Principles of a bad *Education*, it should be our Misfortune to be insensibly *misled* into unwarrantable Dissents and Divisions, yet still to keep our Minds in a *teachable* Temper, and our Ears open to *Truth* and *Conviction*; to be desirous of *Accommodation*, and willing to hear the Reasons on *both sides*, and as soon as we are *convinced* of our Error, to *repent* of our Division and immediately return to *Unity* and *Peace*.

Which if it be our constant Practice and Endeavour, we shall by Degrees form our Minds into

into such a *peaceable* and *amicable* Temper, that when we go into the other World, where we shall be perfectly disengaged from all temporal Interests and thoroughly convinced of all our erroneous Prejudice, our Souls will be effectually tempered to the *quiet* and *peaceable* Society of the Blessed ; who having no private Interests to pursue, no particular Affections to gratify, no Ends or Aims but what are common to them all, which is to *adore* and *imitate* and *love* that never-failing Spring whence all their Felicity flows, it is impossible there should be any occasion administered by any of them of any Schism or Rupture of Communion. And so those happy People live in the most perfect Unity and Concord, as being all united in their Ends, and tied together by their Heart-strings. For they having no counter Opinions or cross Interests to divide them, nothing but Truths *shining* in their Minds, nothing but Goodness *reigning* in their Wills, it is impossible there should be any *dissenting Brother* among them, any *Non-conformist* to the blessed Laws of their Communion ; but conspiring together as they do in the same Mind and Interest, and in the same peaceable Intentions and Affections, they must needs walk Hand in Hand together in a most perfect *Uniformity*, So that if we would live for ever with these blessed Folk, we must *now* endeavour to *calm* and *compose* ourselves into their Temper ; to discharge our Minds, as much as we are able, of every *froward* and *contentious* Humour, and reduce our Wills to a perfect loathing of them ; that so being *qualified* for their Society we may be *admitted* to it when we go away from this *wrang-*
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ling World. And then how unspeakably happy shall we be, when with Minds perfectly refined from all Contention and Bitterness we shall be received into the Company of those *calm* and *sedate* Spirits, and bear our Part in their *sweet* and *placid* Conversation, wherein they freely communicate their Minds to one another without the least *Fierceness* or *Insolence*, *Captiousness* or *Miscenstruction*, *Clamour* or *Contention for Victory*, and do eternally discourse over the *wise* Things of Heaven, and still perfectly concenter both in their *Understandings* and *Wills* ; wherein like so many Stars in Conjunction they mingle Light with one another, and do peaceably communicate the Treasures of their Knowledge without the least Bandyng or Controversy ? For though *some* of them do doubtless know much more than others, yet there being no Intermixture of Error in the Knowledge of *any*, it is impossible they should *oppose* or *contradict* one another, because whatsoever is true, agrees with every thing that is true. And being thus united in Mind and Judgment, they freely communicate their Thoughts without ever disputing one another's Sentences, which renders it impossible for them ever to *quarrel* or *disagree*. So that all their Communion is a perfect *Concord* of Souls ; wherein there is no such thing as a *Schism* or *Divison*, as passing *cruel* Censures or affixing *hard* Names or bandying *Anathema's* at one another, but in Mind and Heart they are all as perfectly *one* as if they were all animated by one and the same Soul, And thus they live unspeakably happy in the mutual Exercise of an everlasting *Peace*, and all their Conversation with one another is perfect *Harmony* without *Discord*.

IV. As we are rational Creatures related to *one another*, we are obliged *modestly* to submit to our *Superiors*, and chearfully to *condescend* to our *Inferiors* in those respective Societies whereof we are Members. These two I put together, because they are Relatives, and as such do mutually explain and contribute Light to each other. Now it being necessary to the Order and End of all Societies that their Members should be distinguished into *superior* and *inferior* Ranks and Stations; that some should be trusted with the Power of *Commanding*, and others reduced to the Condition of *Obedience*, that so in this regular Subordination they may every one in their several Stations be obliged to *aid* and *assist* each other, and according to their several Capacities to contribute to the Good of the *Whole*; which in a State of Equality (wherein every Man would be absolute Lord of himself) cannot be expected, considering the different Humours and Interests by which Men are acted; this, I say, being upon this account necessary, it is upon the same account equally necessary, that they should mutually perform those Offices to one another, which are proper to their respective Ranks and Stations. That Superiors should look upon themselves as *Trustees* for the Publick Good, whom God hath invested with Authority over others not to *domineer* and gratify their own *imperious* Wills, but to *provide* for and *secure* the Common-weal; and consequently to take care that they do not prostitute their *Power* to their own private *Avarice* or *Ambition*, but that they employ it for the Common good and Benefit of their Subjects and Inferiors; that they be ready
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to do them all good Offices, to compassionate their *Infirmities*, consult their *Conveniencies*, and comply with all their reasonable *Supplications*; considering that for this End they derived their Authority from God, who is the Fountain of Authority, to whom they are accountable for their good and bad Administration of it. And so for the Inferiors, it is no less necessary for the Common Good, that they perform their Parts towards those that are above them; that they behave themselves towards them, with all that *Loyalty* and *Modesty*, *Respect* and *Submission*, which their Place and Authority calls for; that they reverence them as the *Vicegerents* of God, and address to them as to *sacred* Persons, and render a chearful Obedience to that divine Authority that is stamp'd upon all their *just* Laws and Commands; considering that in their several Degrees, they represent the Person of the great Sovereign of the World, to whom we owe an intire Subjection, and consequently are in every thing to be *obeyed* and *submitted* to, that he hath not expressly *countermanded*. For that Subjects and Superiors should thus behave themselves towards one another, is indispensably necessary to the Welfare of all Societies. For whilst the Inferiors of any Society do obstinately refuse to submit to the Will of their Superiors, and the Superiors to condescend to the Common Good of their Inferiors, they are contending together, either for a *Confusion* or a *Tyranny*; and if the Superiors prevail, Tyranny follows; if the Inferiors, Confusion: Either of which is extremely mischievous, not only to the Society in general, but to each of the contending Parties.

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For if *Confusion* follows, it is not only the superior Party suffers by being *deposed* from his Authority, but the inferior too by being *deprived* of Protection, and exposed to one another's *Rapine* and *Violence*; and if *Tyranny* follows, it is not only the inferior Party suffers by being forced upon a *rigorous* and *uneasy* Obedience, but the superior too, by being continually perplexed how to *force* and *extort* that Obedience; and thus both Parties suffer under the bad Effects of each other's Misdemeanour. So that to make our Society happy, it is necessary, that whether we be Superiors or Inferiors, we should be of a *gentle*, *yielding* and *treatable* Temper, that so, which Rank soever we are placed in, we may be *pliable* either way, to a *fair* Condescension, or a *just* Submission. For whilst we are of *obstinate*, *perverse*, and *untractable* Tempers, we are neither fit to be Superiors nor Inferiors, but must necessarily be Plagues and Grievances to our Society, which Rank or Order soever we are placed in. And though in this Life we have not always such a sensible Experience of the Evil and Mischief of this *malignant* Temper, because now it is counter-influenced by those more *meek* and *auspicious* ones that are in Conjunction with it; yet when we go into Eternity, we shall be consigned to such a Society of Spirits as are all *throughout* of our own Genius and Temper. For as in the Society of the Blessed there is a Conjunction of every *Virtue* in every Member; so there is of every *Vice* in the Society of the Wicked; who do not only retain those Vices in their Natures, which they were here inclined and addicted to, but are also con-

tinually excited to all other Vices they are capable of, by their inveterate Enmity against God, which in that miserable Estate is perpetually enraged, by their Despair of being ever reconciled to him. So that whatsoever wicked Temper we carry with us into Eternity, we shall be sure to meet with it in every individual Member of the Society of the Wicked; and consequently if we carry thither with us a *perverse* and *untreatable* Temper, that will not endure either to *submit* or *condescend*, we shall be sure to find the same Humour reigning throughout all the Society of the Wicked. And then being eternally united to it, (as we must expect to be if we are allied to it by Nature) in what a miserable State shall we be, when every Member of our Society shall be of the same *unconversable* Temper with ourselves, and we shall find none that will *comply with*, or endeavour to *sooth* and *mollify* our Obstinacy; when all our whole Society shall consist of a Company of *stiff* and *stubborn* Spirits that will neither *submit to*, nor *bear with* one another, but every one will have his Will upon every one, so far as he is able to force and extort it; when those that are superior in might and Power, do all rule with a *fierce* and *tyrannical* Will, and will *condescend* to nothing that is beneficial for their Subjects; and those that are inferior do obey with a *perverse* and *stubborn* Heart, and will *submit* to nothing but what they are *forced* and *compelled* to, and it is nothing but meer Power and Dread by which they *rule* and are *ruled*: In a word, when they all mutually *bate* and *abominate* each other, and those that *command* are a Company of *cruel* and *imperious* Devils,

Devils, that impose nothing but Grievances and Plagues, and those that *obey* are a Company of *surly* and *untractable* Slaves, that submit to nothing but what they are *driven to* by Plagues; so that *Plagues* and *Grievances*, are both the Matter and the Motive of all their Obedience and Subjection; when this, I say, is the State of their Society with one another, how is it possible but that they should be all of them in a most *wretched* and *miserable* Condition? For where all is transacted by *Force* and *Compulsion* (as to be sure all is among such a Company of *perverse* and *self-willed* Spirits) there every one must be supposed to be so far as he is able, a Fury and a Devil to every one; and those that *do compel* are like so many salvage Tyrants, continually vexed and enraged with *stubborn* Oppositions and Resistances, and those that *are compelled* like so many obstinate Gally-Slaves, are continually *lashed* into an unsufferable Obedience, and forced by *one* Torment to submit to *another*; and thus all their Society with one another is a perpetual Intercourse of mutual *Outrage* and *Violence*.

This being therefore the miserable Fate and Issue of a *perverse* and *stubborn* and *untractable* Temper, the Gospel, whose great Design is to direct us to our Happiness, doth industriously endeavour to root it in our Minds, and to plant in its room a *gentle*, *obsequious* and *condescending* Disposition. For hither tend all those Evangelical Precepts which require us *to become weak to the weak, that we may gain them*, 1 Cor. ix. 22. *to bear with their Infirmities*, Rom. xv. 1. *and support them, and be patient towards them*, 1 Thess. v. 14. And

on the other Hand, *to submit ourselves to our Elders*, 1 Pet. v. 5. *and to those that have the rule over us*, Heb. xiii. 17. *to obey our Magistrates, our Parents, and our Masters; to be subject to Principalities; and not speak evil of Dignities; to honour Kings, and submit to their Laws, and Governors*, 1 Pet. ii. 13. 14. In a word, *to honour all Men as they deserve*, 1 Pet. ii, 17. *and to hold good Men in Reputation*, Phil. ii, 19. *and in Honour to prefer one another*, Rom. xii. 10. The Sense of all which is, to oblige us to treat all Men as becomes us, in the Rank and Station we are placed in; *to honour* those that are our *Superiors* whether in Place or Virtue, to give that modest Deference to their Judgments, that Reverence to their Persons, that Respect to their Virtues, and Homage to their Desires or Commands, which the Degree or Kind of their Superiority requires; *to condescend* to those that are our *Inferiors*, and treat them with all that Candour and Ingenuity, Sweetness and Affability, that the respective Distances of our State will allow; to consult their Conveniences, and do them all good Offices, and pity and bear with their Infirmities, so far as they are *safely* and *wisely* tolerable. By the constant Practice of which, our Minds will be gradually cured of all that *Perverseness* and *Surlinefs* of Temper, which indisposes us to the respective Duties of our Relations; of all that *Contempt* and *Selfishness* which renders us averse to the proper Duty of the Superiors, and of all that *Self Conceit* and *Impatience of Command* which indisposes us to the Duty of Inferiors. And our Wills being once wrought into an easy *Pliableness* either to *Submission* or *Condescension*, we are in a forward
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Preparation of Mind to live under the Government of Heaven, where doubtless under God the supreme Lord and Sovereign, there are numberless Degrees of Superiority and Inferiority. For some are said to reap *sparingly* and some *abundantly*, some to be Rulers of *five* Cities, and some of *ten*, some to be the *least*, and some the *greatest* in the Kingdom of Heaven; all which implies, that in that blessed State, there is a great Variety of Degrees of Glory and Advancement. And indeed it cannot be otherwise in the Nature of the thing; for our Happiness consisting in the Perfection of our Natures, the more or less *perfect* we are, the more or less *happy* we must necessarily be; for every farther Degree of Goodness we attain to, is a *widening* and *enlargement* of our Souls for farther Degrees of Glory and Beatitude. And accordingly when we arrive at Heaven, which is the Element of Beatitude, we shall all be filled according to the *Content* and *Measure* of our Capacities, and drink in more or less of its Rivers of Pleasure, as we are more or less *enlarged* to contain them. So that according as we do more and more improve ourselves in true Goodness, we do naturally make more and more Room in our Souls for Heaven, which doth always fill the Vessels of Glory of all sizes, and pour in Happiness upon them till they all overflow and can contain no more. Since therefore they are all of them entirely resigned to, and guided by right Reason, there is no doubt but in these their different Degrees of Glory and Dignity, they mutually behave themselves towards one another, as is most *fit* and *becoming*; and that since under God the

Head and King of their Society, there is from the highest to the lowest a most exact and regular Subordination of Members, they do every one perform their Parts and Duties towards every one, in all those different Stations of Glory they are placed in, and consequently do *submit* and *condescend* to each other, according as they are of a *superior* or *inferior* Class and Order. So that if when we go from hence into the other World, we carry along with us a *submissive* and *condescending* Frame of Spirit, we shall be trained up, and pre-disposed to live under the blessed *Hierarchy* of Heaven; to yield a chearful Conformity to the Laws and Customs of it; and to render all the Honours to those *above*, and all the Condescensions to those *beneath* us in Glory, which the Statutes of that heavenly Regiment do require; in doing whereof we shall all of us enjoy a most unspeakable Content, and Felicity. For though in the Kingdom of Heaven, as well as the Kingdoms of the Earth, there are numberless Degrees of Advancement, and Dignity, and one Star *there*, as well as *here*, differeth from another Star in Glory; yet so *freely*, and *chearfully* do they all *condescend* and submit to each other, in these their respective Differences of Rank and Station, that in the widest Distances of their State, and Degrees of Glory, they all maintain the dearest *Intimacies* and *Familiarities* with each other; and neither those that are Superior are either *envied* for their Height, or *contemned* for their Familiarity; nor those that are Inferior *despised* for their Meanness, or *oppressed* for their Weakness. For in that blessed State, every one being best *pleased* with
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what best becomes him, it is every one's *Joy* to behave himself towards every one as best becomes the Rank and Degree he is placed in ; and those that are *above*, do *glory* in condescending to those that are *below* them, and those that are *below*, do *triumph* in submitting to those that are *above* them ; and thus in all those Differences of Glory and Dignity between them ; they alternately *revere* their Superiors, and *condescend* to their Inferiors, with the same *unforced* Freedom and Alacrity, and so do eternally converse with one another (notwithstanding all their Distances) with the greatest *Freedom*, and most endearing *Familiarity*,

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an account of the first sort of *Means*, by which *Heaven*, the great *End* of a *Christian*, is to be obtained *viz.* the *proximate* and *immediate* ones, which comprehend the Practice of all those Virtues, which as *rational Creatures*, related to *God* and *one another*, we stand eternally obliged to ; and shewed how they are all of them essential Parts of the *Christian Life*, and how *Heaven* itself consists in the *Perfection* of them.

So that upon the whole, the best Definition I can give of the State of Heaven is this, That it is the *everlasting*, *perfect* Exercise of all those *Human*, *Divine* and *Social* Virtues, which as *rational Animals*, related to *God*, and all his *rational Creation*, we are *indispensably* and *everlastingly* obliged to, And therefore since the only natural way, by which we can *acquire* and *perfect* these Virtues is *Use* and *Practice*, it hence necessarily follows, that the *Practice* of them is the only *direct*

and *immediate* Means, by which that *heavenly State* is to be purchased and obtained.

S E C T. IV.

Wherein for a Conclusion of this Chapter, some Motives and Considerations are proposed to persuade Men to the Practice of these heavenly Virtues,

IT having been largely shewn in the foregoing Sections, that the Practice of all those Virtues which are included in the *heavenly Part* of the *Christian Life* tends directly towards the heavenly State, and naturally grows up into it; I shall now briefly conclude this Argument with some *Motives* to persuade Men to the Practice of them. And these I shall deduce,

1. From the *Suitableness* of them to our present *State and Relation*.
2. From the *Dignity*,
3. From the *Freedom*.
4. From the *Pleasure*.
5. From the *Ease*, and
6. And lastly, from the *Necessity* of them.

I. Therefore let us consider the *Suitableness* of these Virtues to our present *State and Relation*. For in our Baptism, wherein we gave up our Names to Christ, we become *Denizens* and *Free-men* of Heaven, and were received into a Covenant that upon Performance of our Part of it actually intitled us to all its blessed *Privileges* and *Immunities*. So that in that sacred Solemnity of our Initiation into the Christian Covenant, we contracted a strict Alliance with the blessed People

ple of Heaven, and became their *Brethren* and *Fellow-Citizens*. For so the Apostle tells us, *Ephes. ii. 19. Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God; and the Household of God* consists of the whole Congregation of the Saints, whether *militant* upon Earth, or *triumphant* in Heaven, For so, *Eph. iii, 15.* it is called *the whole Family of Heaven and Earth*. So that we are Confederates with them in the same Covenant; even that by which they hold all the Joys and Glories they are possessed of; and if we will do as they have done, that is, perform the Conditions of it, we shall be Co-habitants with them in the same Glory. We are adopted Children of the same Father with them, Members of the same Family, Co-heirs of the Promise of the same Glory, Brethren of the same Confraternity and Corporation; and all the Difference between *them* and *us* is only this, that we are *abroad*, and they *at home*; we are on *this*, and they on the *other* side *Jordan*; we in the *Acquest*, and they in the *Possession* of the heavenly *Canaan*; to which we are intitled as well as they, and that by the same Grant from the supreme Proprietor. So that by calling ourselves *Christians*, we do in other Words call ourselves *Brethren*, *Co-heirs*, and *Fellow-Citizens* with the blessed Inhabitants of Heaven. And what can be more *suitable* to such a Profession, than for us to live as they do, in the continued Practice of all these *heavenly Virtues*? And what a Shame will it be for us, that are by Profession their Brethren, not to *copy* and *imitate* their Behaviour; that we who are below Stairs in the same

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House and Family should abandon ourselves to *Sensuality* and *Devilishness*, whilst our blessed Kindred above are entertaining themselves with those heavenly Pleasures which result from the perfect Exercise of all *heavenly Virtue*; that we should be *neglecting, provoking, and blaspheming* God, whilst they are *contemplating and admiring, loving and praising, imitating and obeying* him; that we should be *cheating and defrauding, envying and despising, maligning and embroiling* one another, whilst they are conversing together with the greatest *Freedom and Integrity*, with the most obliging *Respects and Condescensions*, and in the strictest *Unity and dearest Friendship*? What a vile Reproach are our wicked Lives to the Conversation of these our *Fellow-Citizens* above? for while we profess ourselves their *Brethren*, those who understand no better will be prone to suspect that *they* live as *we* do, and how would such a Suspicion tempt an honest Heathen to renounce Heaven, as the *Indian King* did, when he was told that the bloody *Spaniards* went thither; and rather chuse to go down to the darkest Hell, than to a Heaven, that is peopled with such *Diabolical* Company? So that by our *wicked and un-saint-like* Lives, we take an effectual Course to bring Heaven itself into Disgrace, and to cast such a Slander on its blessed Inhabitants, as may justly expose them to the scorn and Hatred of all those honest Minds that know them no otherwise than by us their *unworthy and degenerate* Fellow-Citizens; and could those blessed Spirits look down from their Thrones of Bliss, and see what a Company of *wretched* Christians there are that claim *Kindred* with them, they would doubtless be

be ashamed of the *Relation*, and count themselves highly dishonoured and disgraced by it, and heartily wish that we would disown our *Sins* or our *Baptism*, and openly renounce their *Alliance*, or more strictly imitate their *Manners*. And really it is a burning Shame that we should profess ourselves Fellow-Citizens with them for no other purpose but to *scandalize* and *reproach* them; and it were heartily to be wished, even for the *Credit* of Heaven and of our blessed Brethren, that inhabit it, that if we will not be so *generous* as to follow their Example, we would at least be so *honest* as to renounce their Kindred, and not claim a Relation to their Family merely to *shame* and *disgrace* them.

II. Consider the *Honour* and *Dignity* of the heavenly Life. For if we may estimate Actions by the Examples from whence they are copied as in other Cases we are wont to do, doubtless the most *noble* and *honourable* are such as are copied, from the Lives of the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven. For, besides that supreme Rank of Dignity whereunto they are advanced, as being the Courtiers and immediate Attendants of the Almighty Sovereign of Heaven and Earth; a Dignity which by how much more it excels that of the greatest Potentate of this World, by so much more it *authorizes* the Examples of those that wear it; besides this, I say, their Examples being the most perfect Copies and Imitations of the Life of God, are thereby rendered not only more *eminent* and *glorious*, but also more *obliging* and *authoritative*. For by following them, we follow God, who is the Standard of all rational Perfection, and who by being the first and best in the whole kind
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of rational Entities, is the supreme Rule and Measure of them all. So that in imitating the blessed People above, we imitate those who in *their* Place and Station do live at the same Rate as the great God doth in *his*, and regulate themselves by the same infallible Reason. We do what God himself would do if he were in *our* Place, and what the Son of God himself did do when he was in *our* Natures; and there is no other Difference between *his* Life and *ours*, but what necessarily arises out of our different States and Relations. And what more *glorious* Thing can we do, than to live by the Pattern of *their* Lives, who live so exactly by the Pattern of God's? For the Example of living which those blessed People set us, is the Example of God at *second hand*; it is his most rational Life *transcribed*, so far as it is rationally *imitable*, that is, so far as it is *honourable* and *glorious* for a rational Creature to transcribe it. For in the State of *finite* Creatures, they live in a perfect Conformity to the same immutable Reason whereby God regulates himself in the State of an *infinite* Creator. So that their Example is an Imitation in kind of all those particular Excellencies in him, which they *may* and *ought* to imitate; and it is an Imitation in general of that eternal *Decorum* with respect to Conditions and States, which he constantly observes in all his Transactions with his Creatures. And as their Example is a perfect Copy of God's, so it is a Copy fitted in all Particulars for our Use and Imitation. For it doth not only describe to us all those particular *Excellencies* in him which are to be imitated by us, but all those particular *Duties* to

to which that eternal Law of Equity and Goodness by which he governs *himself* in his *State* requires of *us* in *ours*; and shews not only wherein we are to imitate him *in kind*, but also wherein we are to follow him *in general*, in doing what is most fit for us in the State and Relation of *Creatures*, even as he doth what is most fit for him in the State and Relation of a God and *Creator*. So that the Example of those heavenly Inhabitants is the Example of God himself, exactly fitted and attempered to the State and Condition of Creatures. For just as they live, the All-wise and All-good God himself would live, if he were in their State and Relation. Wherefore by imitating their heavenly Lives, and Manners, we do ourselves the greatest Right, and do most effectually consult the *Glory* and *Honour* of our own Natures. For whilst we tread in theirs, we tread in the Footsteps of God, and have his glorious Example to warrant and justify our Actions; we behave ourselves as it becomes the Children of the King of Heaven, and so far as it consists with the Condition of Creatures, we live like so many Gods in the World; which is doubtless the utmost Height of *Honour* and *Glory* that any rational Ambition can aspire to. So that methinks had we any Spark of true Gallantry and Bravery of Mind in us, we should despise all other kinds of Life but *this*, and pity those gilded Bubbles that have nothing to boast of but their fine Clothes, and great Estates, and empty Titles of Honour; we should look upon all other Dignities as the trifling Play-games of Children in Comparison with *this*, of living like the great Nobility of Heaven,

Heaven, that do all live by the Pattern of the Life of God.

III. Consider the great *Freedom* and *Liberty* of a heavenly Life. So long as we live *earthly* and *sensual* Lives, our free-born Souls are imprisoned in Sense, and all their Motions are circumscribed and bounded within the narrow Sphere of *sensitive* Goods and Enjoyments. So that when we would follow our Reason, and do as that prescribes and dictates, we find ourselves miserably *hampered* and *intangled*; the Lusts of our Flesh do hang like Gyves so *heavily* upon us, that whenever our Reason and Conscience call, we cannot move with any *Freedom*, but are fain to *labour* at every Step, and after a few faint Effays are utterly *tired* under the Weight of our *reluctant* Inclinations. So that the Good which many times we would, we do not, the Law in our Minds being counter-voted by the Law in our Members. Our Reason and Conscience tell us, that we ought to *love* God above all, to *adore* and *worship* him, and surrender up ourselves to his Command and Disposal; and we are many times strongly inclined to follow its Dictates and Directions; but alas, when we come to put them in Execution, we find so many Pull-backs within us, so many *strong* and *stubborn* Aversions to our good Inclinations, that we have not the Power to do as we would, nor to dispose of ourselves according to our own most reasonable Desires, but like miserable Slaves that are chained to the Oar, we are fain to row on whithersoever our imperious Lusts do command us, though we plainly see we are running on a Rock, and invading our own Destruction.

And

And as we are not free in this ill State of Life to follow our *Reason*, so neither are we free to follow our *Lusts*. For as when we would follow our Reason, our Lusts *cling about* and *intangle us* ; so when we would follow our Lusts, our Reason *clogs* and *restrains* us, and by objecting to us the *Indecency* and *Danger*, the infinite *Turpitude* and *Hazard* of our sinful Courses, lays so many Rubs in our Way, that we cannot sin with any Freedom, but whithersoever we go we walk like Prisoners with the Shackles of *Shame* and *Fear* on our Heels. So that which way soever we turn ourselves we find that our Power to dispose of ourselves is under a great *Restraint* and *Confinement*, and we can neither get leave of our Lusts to follow our Reason, nor of our Reason to follow our Lusts. For when we attempt the *latter*, our Reason curbs us with *Shame* and *Fear* ; and when we endeavour the *former*, our Appetite bridles us with *Dislike* and *Aversion*. In this Extremity therefore what is to be done that we may be *free* ? Why the Case is plain, we must resolve to conquer either our Reason or our Lusts : If we conquer our Reason, (which we shall find by far the *harder* Task of the two) we shall acquire the Freedom of *Devils* and *Brutes*, the Freedom to do Mischief, and wallow in the Mire without Shame or Remorse ; but if we conquer our Lusts, we acquire the Freedom of *Men*, yea, of *Saints* and of *Angels* ; the Freedom to act reasonably without Reluctance or Aversion ; and this being much more *easily* to be acquired than the former, I dare appeal to any Man's Reason which of the two is in itself most eligible. If therefore we would vindicate our *rational* Freedom,

Freedom, we must resolve to shake off those slavish Fetters, our *brutish* and our *devilish* Appetites, that do so perpetually *turmoil* and *incumber* us in all our virtuous Attempts and rational Operations; we must tie up ourselves from executing their Commands, and serving their wicked Wills and Pleasures, and heartily resolve to act as it becomes us in the Capacity of rational Creatures related to *God* and *one another*. And then though *at first* we must expect to find ourselves *confined* and *straitned* by our vicious Aversations, we shall be immediately released from all that *Shame* and *Fear* which did so continually curb us in the Career of our Wickedness; and even our *vicious* Aversation (if we courageously persist in our *good* Resolution) will grow weaker and weaker, and be every Day less and less cumberfom to us, till it is *totally* extinguished. And then we shall feel ourselves intirely restored into our own Power, and be able without *Check* or *Contrroll* to dispose of ourselves and all our Motions according as it shall seem to us most *fit* and *reasonable*; then we shall act with the greatest Vigour and Freedom, having no counter-striving Principles to *restrain* or *retard* us, no vicious Aversions on the one side, or guilty Shame or Fear on the other to *counterpoise* us in our rational Motions; then we shall move without Check or Confinement in a large and noble Sphere, for we shall be pleased with what is *fit* and *wise* and *good* without any Reserve or Exception, and we shall do what we please without any *Lett* or *Hindrance*. so that by ingaging ourselves in the *heavenly Life*, we enter into a State of glorious *Liberty*, and if we constantly
persist

persist in it, and do still *prevalently* list to live as becomes us, we shall be more and more free to live as we *list*, till at last we are arrived into a perfect Liberty, wherein we shall live without Restraint or Controul, without Check of Conscience, or Reluctance of Inclination, which are the two main Bars that *confine* and *straiten* Men in their Operations. If therefore we would ever be *free*, let us immediately come off from our vicious Courses to the Practice of this divine and heavenly Life, wherein by Degrees, if we courageously hold on, we shall wear off those Shackles that do so miserably hamper and intangle us; and then we shall be entirely free to do whatsoever our Reason dictates to us; then we shall *run the ways of God's Commandments*, and like our blessed Brethren above be all Life and Spirit and Wing in the Discharge of our Duty to him.

IV. Consider the *Pleasure* of this *heavenly Life*. It is true, there is a sort of Pleasure that results from all the Acts of a *sensual* and *earthly* Conversation; but we find by Experience, that though in the Pursuit it strangely *allures* and *enchants* us, yet in the Fruition it always *disappoints* our Expectation, and scarce *performs* in the Enjoyment one half of what it *promised* to our Hope; and at the best it is but a *present* and *transient* Satisfaction of our *brutish* Sense, a Satisfaction that *dims* the Light, *fullies* the Beauty, *impairs* the Vigour, and *restrains* the Activity of the Mind; diverting it from *better* Operations, and indisposing it to the Fruition of *purser* Delights; leaving no *comfortable* Relish or *gladsom* Memory behind it, but oftentimes *going out* in a Stink, and *determining*

in Bitterness, Regret, and Disgrace. But in each Act of this divine and celestial Life, there is something of the *Pleasure of Heaven*, something of those *divine* Refreshments and Consolations upon which the good People of Heaven do live. For the greatest Part of their Heaven springs from within their own Bosoms, even from the Conformity of their Souls to the heavenly State, and the sprightly Out-goings of their Minds and Affections towards the heavenly Objects; from their *contemplating* and *loving*, their *praising* and *adoring* the most high God, from their *Imitation* of his Perfections, their *Subjection* to his Will, and *Dependance* on his Veracity; all which Acts, as I have already shewed, have the most *ravishing* Pleasures appendant to them, and are so necessary to the Felicity of rational Creatures, that the Wit of Man cannot fancy a *rational* Heaven without them. For the Heaven of a rational Creature consisting in the most *intense* and *vigorous* Exercise of its rational Faculties about the most *suitable* and *convenient* Objects, what Object can be more convenient to such Faculties than that Almighty Sovereign of Beings, whose *Power* is the Spring of all *Truth*, and whose *Nature* is the *Pattern* of all *Goodness*, So that without a perfect Union of our Minds and Wills and Affections with God, there can be no possible *Idea* of a perfect Heaven of rational Pleasures, but in this blessed Union lies the very *Soul* and *Quintessence* of Heaven. Since therefore in every Act of every Virtue of the divine Life, there is at least an imperfect Union of the Soul with God, it necessarily follows, that there must be some Degree of the Pleasure of Heaven

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in every one. So that if we do not experience much greater Joy and Delight in the Acts of this divine Life, than ever we did in the highest Epicurisms and Sensualities, it is not because there are not much *greater* in them, but because we never exerted them with that *Sprightliness* and *Vigour*, as we do our sensual Appetites and Perceptions; because we are *clogged* in the Exercise of them either by *false* Principles, or *bodily* Indispositions, or *sinful* Aversations. But if we would take the Pains to *inure* and *accustom* ourselves to these heavenly Acts, we should find by Degrees they would grow *natural* and *easy* to us; and our Souls would be so *habituated*, *contempered*, and *disposed* to them, that we should upon all Occasions exert them with great Freedom and Enlargement. And then we should begin to feel and relish the Pleasure of them; then we should perceive a Heaven of Delights springing up from within us, and unfolding itself in each beatifical Act of our heavenly Conversation: then we should find ourselves under the *central* Force of a Heaven, most sweetly drawn along and attracted thither by the powerful Magnetism of its Joys and Pleasures; and in every Act of our celestial Behaviour we should have some Foretaste of the celestial Happiness. So that now we should no longer need external Arguments to convince us of the Truth and Reality of that blessed State; for we should feel it within ourselves, and be able to penetrate into its blessed Mysteries by the Light of an infallible Experience. Now we should have no Occasion to search the *Records* of Heaven to assure ourselves of our Interest in it; for by a most *sensible* Earnest

of Heaven within us, we should be as *fully* satisfied of our Title to it, as if one of the winged Messengers of Heaven should come down from thence and tell us that he saw our Names *inrolled* in the Book of Life. And with this sweet Experience of Heaven within us we should go on to Heaven with unspeakable Triumph and Alacrity, being rolled all along from Step to Step with the alluring Relishes of its Joys and Pleasures; and in every vigorous Exercise of every Virtue of the heavenly Life, we should have such lively *Tastes* and *Sensations* of Heaven, as would continually excite us to exercise them more *vigorously*; and still the more *vigorously* we exerted them, the *more* of Heaven we should taste in them; and so the *Vigour* of our Virtue would encrease the *Pleasure* of it, and the *Pleasure* of it encrease its *Vigour*, till both are perfected and grown up into the blessed State of Heaven. Wherefore as we do love Pleasure, which is the great Invitation to Action, let us be persuaded once for all to make a thorough Experiment of the *heavenly Life*; and if upon a sufficient Tryal you do not find it the most *pleasant* kind of Life that ever you led, if you do not experience a far more noble Satisfaction in it than ever you did in all your *studied* and *artificial* Luxuries, I give you leave to brand me for an *Impostor*;

V, Consider the great *Repose* and *Ease* of a heavenly Life and Conversation, In every *sensual* and *devilish* Course of Life, we find by Experience there is a great deal of *Uneasiness* and *Disquiet*. For the Mind is *disturbed*, the Conscience *galled*, the Affections *divided* into opposite
Factions,

Factions, and the whole Soul in a most *diseased* and *restless* Posture. And indeed it is no Wonder it should be so, since it is an *unnatural* State and Condition. For whilst it is in any unreasonable Course of Action, the very Frame and Constitution of it, as it is a rational Being, suffers an unnatural Violence, and is all *unjointed* and *disordered*. And therefore as a Body when its Bones are *out*, is never at Rest till they are *set* again; so a rational Soul, when its Faculties and Powers are *dislocated* and put out of their *natural*, i. e. *rational* Course of Action, is continually *restless* and *disturbed*, and always *tossing* to and fro, *shifting* from one Posture to another, *turning* itself from this to t'other Object and Enjoyment, but finding no Ease or Satisfaction in *any*, till it is restored again to its own rational Course of Motion, and that is to act and move towards God, for whom it was made, and in whom alone it can be happy. And if its Reason were not strangely *doxed* and *stupefied* with Sense and sensitive Pleasure, it would doubtless be a thousand times more *restless* and *dissatisfied* in this its preternatural State than it is; it would feel much more Distraction of Mind, Anguish of Conscience, and Tumult of Affections than it is now capable of, amidst the numerous Enjoyments and Diversions of this World. For as a musical Instrument, were it a living thing, would doubtless be sensible of *Harmony* as its proper State (as a great Author of our own ingeniously discourses) and abhor *Discord* and *Dissonancy* as a thing preternatural to it; even so were our Reason but *alive* and *awake* within us, our Souls, which according to their natural Frame

were made *Unison* with God, would be *exquisitely* sensible of those divine Virtues wherein its *Consonancy* consists, as of that which is its proper State and native Complection; and complains as sadly of the *vicious* Distempers of its Faculties. as the Body doth of *Wounds* and *Diseases*; it would be perfectly *sick* of every unreasonable Motion, and never be able to *rest* till its *disjointed* Faculties, were *rectified*, and all its *disordered* Strings set *in tune* again. Which being once effected (as it will *quickly* be in a continued Course of heavenly Action) we shall presently find our Souls disburthened of all those *malignant* Humours that do so perpetually *disease*, *disquiet*, and *disturb* us. For by *relying* upon God, we shall totally quit and discharge ourselves of all those restless Cares and Anxieties which circle and prick us like a Crown of Thorns, by our hearty *Submission* to his heavenly Will, we shall ease our Consciences of all that Horrour, Rage, and Anguish which proceeds from the envenomed Stings of our Guilt; by *loving*, *admiring*, and *adoring* him, our Affections will be cured of all that Inconsistence and Inordinancy that render them so *tumultuous* and *disquieting*. And these Things being once accomplished, the *sick* and *restless* Soul will presently find itself in perfect *Health* and *Ease*. For now all her jarring Faculties being tuned to the musical Laws of Reason, there will be a perfect Harmony in her Nature, and she will have no disquieting Principle within her; nothing but *calm* and *gentle* Thoughts, *soft* and *sweet* Reflections, *tame* and *manageable* Affections, nothing but what abundantly contributes to her *Repose* and *Satisfaction*. So that do
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but imagine what an Ease the Body enjoys, when after a lingering Sickneſs it recovers a ſound Conſtitution, and feels a lively Vigour poſſeſſing every Part, and actuating the Whole; ſuch and much more is the Ease and Quiet of the Soul, when by the diligent Practice of the heavenly Life it feels itſelf recovered from the languiſhing Sickneſs of a ſenſual and devilish Nature. Now ſhe is no more *tossed* and *agitated* in a ſtormy Sea of reſtleſs Thoughts and guilty Reflections, no more *ſcorched* with Impatience, or *drowned* with Grief, or *ſhook* with Fear, or *bloated* with Pride or Ambition, but all her Affections are reſigned to the bleſſed Empire of a ſpiritual Mind, and cloathed in the Livery of her Reaſon. Now all the War and Conteſt between the Law in her *Members* and the Law in her *Mind* is ended in a glorious Victory and happy Peace; and thoſe *divided* Streams, her Will and Conſcience, her Paſſions and her Reaſon, are united in *one* Channel, and flow towards *one* and the ſame Ocean. And being thus jointed and knit together by the Ties and Ligaments of Virtue, the Soul is perfectly *well* and *easy*, and enjoys a moſt ſweet *Repoſe* within itſelf. Wherefore as you value your own Reſt and Ease, and would not be endleſſly *turmoiled* and *diſquieted*, be perſuaded heartily to engage yourſelves in the Courſe of a heavenly Converſation; and then though at firſt you muſt expect to find ſome *difficulty* in it by reaſon of its Contrariety to your corrupt Natures, yet if you vigorously *perſiſt* in it, you will find the Difficulty will ſoon *wear off*, and then it will be *all* Ease and Pleaſure. For when our Nature is depraved either by *Senſuality* or

Devilishness, it is like a Bone out of joint, full of Pain while it is *out*, and much more painful while it is *setting*, but as soon as *that* is done, it is immediately *well* and *easy*.

VI. And lastly, Consider the absolute *Necessity* of this heavenly Life and Conversation. For besides that God exacts it of us as an indispensable Condition of our Happiness, and hath assured us that *if we live after the Flesh we shall die*, and that *without Holiness we shall never see the Lord*; besides this, I say an heavenly Conversation is in the Nature of the thing *necessary* to qualify us for Heaven, or, as the Apostle expresses it, *to make us meet to be Partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light*. For Happiness being a *relative* thing, implies in the very Nature of it a mutual *Correspondence* between the *Objects* which present us with Happiness, and the *Faculties* which taste and enjoy them; and be the Objects never so good in themselves, never so pregnant with Pleasure and Bliss, yet if they do not *agree* with the Faculties whereunto they are objected, instead of *blessing*, they will but *afflict* and *torment* them; and if a Man were placed in the midst of Heaven among all the *ravishing* Fruitions with which that blessed Place abounds; yet unless his Mind and Temper did *suit* and *agree* with them, they would be so many *Miseries* and *Vexations* to him, and he would be *afflicted* even in *Abraham's Bosom*, and grope for *Heaven* in the midst of *Paradise*. So that supposing that God were so unreasonably *fond* of the Happiness of wicked Souls as to prefer it before the Honour of his Government, and the Purity of his Nature, and the Sanction of his

Laws,

Laws, yet still there is an *invincible* Obstacle behind that must render their future Felicity *impossible*; and that is, that it cannot be without a plain *Contradiction* to the Nature of things, the Temper of wicked Souls being wholly *repugnant* to all the Felicities of the other World. So that if they were all set before them, they would not be able to enjoy them, but must be forced to *pine* and *famish* amidst all that Plenty of Delights, there being no Viand in all that heavenly Entertainment that they would relish any Sweetness in. And therefore if God should so far pardon them, as not to *punish* them himself by any immediate Stroke of Vengeance, *that* would be the *utmost* Favour that his Omnipotent Goodness could do for them whilst they continued in their Sins; which, notwithstanding such a Pardon, would for ever continue them extremely miserable. And what great matter doth a Pardon signify to a Malefactor that is dying of the Stone or Strangury? He could but have died though he had *not been* pardoned, and die he *must* though he *be*. And just as little almost would it signify to a depraved Soul to be pardoned and absolved by God, whilst it hath a Disease within that preys upon its Vitals, and hastens it to a certain Ruin. For it could have been but miserable in the future Life, if it had not been pardoned, and miserable it must be, if it continue wicked, whether it be pardoned or no. For it is not so much the Place as the State that makes either Heaven or Hell; and the State of Heaven and Hell consists in perfect *Holiness* and *Wickedness*; and proportionably as we do improve in *either* of these, so we do approach towards the

one State or the other. For as Heaven is the Center of all that is *virtuous*, *pure* and *holy*, and all that is *good* tends thither by a natural Sympathy ; so Hell is the Center of all *Impiety* and *Wickedness*, and all that is *bad* doth naturally press and sink down thither, as towards its proper Place and Element ; and should not the divine Vengeance concern itself to exclude wicked Souls out of Heaven, yet their own Wickedness would do it. For that is a Place of such inaccessible Light and Purity, that no Impurity or Wickedness can approach it, but must of necessity be beaten off with the dreadful Lightnings of its Glory, and tumbled headlong down as oft as it essays to climb up thither ; as on the other hand, should not God by an immediate Vengeance precipitate wicked Souls into Hell, yet their own Wickedness by the mighty Weight of its own Nature, would inevitably press and sink them down into that miserable Condition. What egregious Nonsense therefore is it, for wicked Men to talk of going to Heaven ! Alas ! poor Creatures, what would you do there ! There are no wanton *Amours* among those heavenly *Lovers* ; no Rivers of *Wine* among their Rivers of Pleasure to gratify your unbounded *Sensuality* ; no *Parasites* to flatter your lofty *Pride* ; no *Miseries* to feed your meagre *Envy* ; no *Mischiefs* to tickle your devilish *Revenge* ; nothing but *chaste* and *divine*, *pure* and *spiritual* Enjoyments, such as your *brutish* and *devilish* Appetites will eternally *loath* and *nauseate*. Wherefore if we mean to go to Heaven, and to be happy there, we must now endeavour to *dispose* and *attemper* our Minds to it ; which is no other way to be done, but by leading a heavenly Life
and

and Conversation ; which by degrees will *habituate* and *naturalize* our Souls to the heavenly Virtues, and so *work* and *inlay* them into the Frame and Temper of our Minds, that it will be our greatest Pleasure to be *exerting* and *exercising* them. And then our Souls will be *dressed* and *made ready* for Heaven, and when we go from hence to take Possession of its Joys, they will be all so agreeable to our *prepared* Appetites, that we shall presently fall to and feed upon them with infinite Gust and Relish. But till by living a heavenly Life we have disposed ourselves for Heaven, we are utterly incapable of enjoying it. So that now things are reduced to this Issue, that either our *Sins* or our *Souls* must die, and we must necessarily shake Hands either with *Heaven* or our *Lusts*. . And therefore unless we value eternal Happiness so little as to exchange it for the *sordid* and *trifling* Pleasures of Sin, and unless we love our Sins so well as to ransom them with the Blood of our immortal Souls, it concerns us speedily to engage ourselves in this heavenly Life and Conversation. For this is an eternal and immutable Law, that if we will be *wicked*, we must be *miserable*.

C H A P. IV.

Concerning the militant or warfaring Part of the Christian Life, by which we are to acquire and perfect the heavenly Virtues; shewing how effectually all the Duties of it conduce thereunto.

HAVING in the former Chapter given a large Account of the *heavenly Part* of the *Christian Life*, and shewn how *directly* and *immediately* the Practice of all the Virtues that are comprehended in it tends to the heavenly State, and how *naturally* they all grow into eternal Happiness; I shall in the next Place endeavour to give some brief Account of that Part of the *Christian Life* which is purely *militant*, and which wholly consists of those *instrumental Duties*, by the Use of which we are to conquer the *Difficulties* of those heavenly Virtues, and to *acquire* and *perfect* them. Which Difficulties, as I shewed before, *Chap. ii.* are the inbred *Corruptions* of our own Nature, together with those manifold *Temptations* from without, by which they are continually *provoked* and *excited*; and so to *subdue* and *conquer* these, as that they may neither take us off *from*, nor clog and indispose us *in* the Exercise of the *heavenly Virtues*, is the great Design and Business of this *warfaring Part* of the Christian Life.

That I may therefore handle it distinctly, I shall divide it into three Parts, and endeavour with as much Brevity as I can; First, to *explain*
the

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the Duties of each Part, and to shew how they all conduce to our *conquering* the Difficulties of the *heavenly Virtues*, and to the *acquiring* and *perfecting* them; and, Secondly, To *press* the Duties of each Part with *proper* and *suitable* Arguments.

In this Part of our Christian Life therefore there is,

1. Our *Beginning* or *Entrance* into it, which is in Scripture called, *Repentance from dead Works*.

2. Our *Course* and *Progress* in it, and this is nothing but a *holy Life*,

3. Our *Perfecting* and *Consummation* of it, and this is *final Perseverance* in well-doing. Each of which have their proper and peculiar Duties, which I shall endeavour in this Chapter to *explain* and *enforce*.

S E C T. I.

Concerning those Duties that are proper to our Beginning and Entrance into this warfaring Part of our Christian Life; shewing how they all conduce to the subduing of Sin, and acquiring the heavenly Virtues.

THIS first Part of our *militant* Life being nothing but our *Initial* Repentance, or the first *turning* of our Souls to God from a state of wilful Sin and Rebellion, the Duties that are proper to it, and by which this *turn* of our Souls is to be introduced and performed, may be reduced to these six Heads.

1. A hearty and firm *Belief* of the Truth of our *Religion*.

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2. A due *Consideration* of its *Motives*, and a balancing of them with the *Hardships* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo.

3. A deep and thorough *Conviction* of our great need of a *Mediator* to render us acceptable to God,

4. A hearty *Sorrow*, *Shame*, and *Remorse* for our Sins past.

5. Earnest *Prayer* to God for *Aid* and *Assistance* to enable us effectually to renounce them.

6. A serious and well weighed *Resolution* to forsake and abandon them for ever.

I. It is necessary to our good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*, that we should heartily believe the *Truth* and *Reality* of our Religion. For our hearty *Belief* of the Gospel is in Scripture represented as the main and principal Weapon by which we are to combat against the World and our own Lusts. And hence it is called the *Shield of Faith*, and the *Breastplate of Faith*, which are the two principal parts of Armour of *Defence*, denoting that an hearty *Belief* of the Gospel is the principal *Defence* of a Christian against all the *fiery Darts* of Temptation; the Armour of Proof that guards our Innocence, and renders us invulnerable in all our spiritual Conflicts. For, *above all things*, saith the Apostle, *take the Shield of Faith whereby ye shall be able to quench the fiery Darts of the wicked one*, Eph. vi. 16. And as it is the principal part of our *defensive*, so it is also of our *offensive* Armour. For so we find all the Victories and Triumphs of those glorious Heroes, Heb. xi. attributed to this irresistible Weapon of their Faith. 'Twas by Faith that they despised Crowns, confronted the

the Anger of Kings, and triumphed over the bitterest Torments and Affections; by *Faith* that they wrought *Righteousness*, obtained *Promises*, stopped the Mouth of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, escaped the Edge of the Sword, and out of weakness were made strong. Nay so, great a Share hath *Faith* in the Successes of our *Christian Warfare*, that it is called by the Apostle, *the good Fight of Faith*, 1 Tim. vi, 13. and St. *John* assures us, that *this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith*, 1 Joh. v. 4.

For if we firmly believe the Gospel, that will furnish us with undeniable Answers to return to all Temptations, and enable us infinitely to *outbid* the World whatsoever it should proffer us for our Innocence. For our *Belief* of the Gospel carries in the one hand infinitely greater *Goods*, and in the other infinitely greater *Evils* to *allure* and *bind* us fast to our Duty, than any the World can propose to *entice*, or *terrify* us from it. For on the one hand it discovers to us those immortal Regions of the Blessed, which are the proper Seat and pure Element of Happiness; where the blessed Inhabitants live in a continued Fruition of their utmost Wishes, being every Moment entertained with fresh and inravishing Scenes of Pleasure; where all their Happiness is *eternal*, and all their Eternity nothing else but one continued Act of *Love*, and *Praise*, and *Joy* and *Triumph*; where there are no *Sighs* or *Tears*; no Intermixtures of *Sorrow* or *Misery*, but every Heart is full of *Joy*, and every Joy is a *Quintessence*, and every happy Moment is crowned with some fresh and new Enjoyment. On the other hand it sets before

our Eyes a most *frightful* and *amazing* Prospect of those dismal Shades of Horror, where mighty Numbers of condemned Ghosts perpetually wander to and fro, tormented with endless *Rage* and *Despair*; where they always *burn* without *consuming*, always *faint*, but never *die*, being forced to languish out a long Eternity in unpitied Sighs and Groans. And after such a Prospect as this what *poor inconsiderable* Trifles will all the Goods and Evils of this World appear to us? But yet unless we *believe* the Reality of them, how great soever they may be in *themselves*, they will signify no more to our *Hope* and *Fear* (which are the Master Springs of our Action) than if they were so many golden *Dreams* or lifeless *Scare-crows*. For all Proposals of Good and Evil do work upon the Minds of Men proportionably as they are *believed* and *assented* to; and as that which is not *true*, is *not*, so that which we do not *believe*, is to us as if it *were not*. How then is it possible we should be moved by that Good or Evil which we do not *believe*, and in which by consequence we cannot apprehend ourselves *concerned*?

Wherefore in our *Entrance* into the *Christian Warfare*, it is highly necessary that we do not take up our Faith at a *venture*, and believe *winking*, without knowing *why* or *wherefore*; but that we should, so far as we are able, impartially examine the *Evidences* of our Religion, and search into the *Grounds* of its *Credibility*, that so we may be able to give some Reason to *ourselves* and *others* of the Hope that is in us. For which End it will be needful that we should read, and impartially consider, some of the *Apologies* for the *Christian Religion*;

Religion; of which we have sundry excellent ones in our own Language *; and if we will but take the Pains to instruct ourselves in the *plain* and *easy* Evidences of *Christianity*, we shall quickly see abundant cause to assent to it; and then our Faith, being founded on a firm Basis of Reason, will be able to bid defiance to the World, and to out-stand the most furious Storms of Temptation.

II. To our good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*, it is also necessary that we should duly consider the *Motives* of our Religion, and balance them with the *Hardships* and *Difficulties* we are to undergo. For thus our Saviour makes *Consideration* a necessary Introduction to our *Christian Warfare*, Luke xiv. 28. where he compares Men's rushing headlong into the Difficulties of the Christian Life without Consideration, to a Man's resolving to build a Tower without computing the Charge of it, or a King's going to War without ever considering before-hand whether with his Army of ten Thousand he be able to encounter his Enemy with Twenty. By both which Comparisons he intimates to us the unprosperous Issue of Men's listing themselves under his Banner to combat the Devil, the World, and their own Lusts, without ever considering before-hand either their *own* Strength or their *Enemies*, the Arguments with which *they* must fight, or the Difficulties that will *cross* and *oppose* them. So that when they come to execute their rash Resolution, there start up so many Difficulties in their way, which

* Dr. *Stillingfleet's*, *Origines*. Dr. *Patrick's* Translation of *Grotius*.
Sir *Charles Wolfely*.

they never *thought of*, and against which they took no care to *fore-arm* themselves, that they have not the Heart and Courage to stand before them, but after a few faint Attempts are presently sounding a cowardly Retreat.

For indeed *Consideration* is the Life and Soul of Faith, that *animates* and *actuates* its Principles, and *elicites* and *draws forth* all their natural Power and Energy. And let the Truths we believe be never so *weighty* and *momentous* in themselves, never so apt to *spirit* and *invigorate* us, yet unless we seriously *consider* and *apply* them to our Wills and Affections, and take the pains to extract out of them their native Vigour and Efficacy, and to infuse it into our Faculties and Powers, they will lie like so many dead Notions in our Minds, and never impart to us the least Degree of spiritual Courage and Activity. And accordingly our Saviour attributes the ill Success of God's Word in the Hearts of Men (which he compares to the *High-way*, the *stony* and *thorny* Ground) either to their not considering it *at all*, or to their not considering it *deeply* enough, or to their not considering it *long* enough. Either the divine Truths which they heard went no farther than their Ears, and so lay openly exposed like so many loose Corns upon the High-way to be picked up by the Fowls of the Air; or if it entered into their Mind and Consideration, it was so *slightly* and *superficially*, that like Corn sown in a rocky ground it had not Depth enough to take root, to *fasten* and *grow* into their Minds, and *digest* into Principles of Action; or if they at present received it into their deeper and more serious Consideration, it

was but for a *little while*, for by and by they permit their worldly Cares and Pleasures, like Thorns, to spring up in their Thoughts and choak it, before it was arrived to any Maturity. But that which rendered it so *prosperous* and *fruitful* in good and honest Hearts, was, that having heard the Word they *kept it*, *i. e.* retained it in their *Thoughts* and *Consideration*, and so brought forth Fruit with *Patience*; Luke viii. 12, 13, 14, 15. So that to the making of a good *Beginning* in Religion, it is not only necessary that we should *ponder* the Motives and Arguments of Religion, and balance them with the Difficulties of it, but that we should *revolve* and *repeat* them on our Minds till we have represented to ourselves with the utmost Life and Reality, whatsoever makes *for* and *against* our Entrance into the Christian Warfare? and upon our having weighed them over and over in the Scales of an even and impartial Judgment, we have brought the Debate to this Result and Conclusion, that there is infinitely more Weight in the *Arguments* of Religion to *persuade* us to it, than in all the *Difficulties* of it to *dishearten* us from it. For unless we enter into Religion *fore-armed* with the Motives, and *forewarned* of the Difficulties of it, we shall never be able to stand our Ground: but finding more *Opposition* than we expected, and having not a sufficient Strength of Argument to *bear up* against it, we shall quickly *repent* of our rash Undertaking, and be forced to *retreat* from it with Shame and Dishonour. For this is usually the Issue of those *rash* and *unsettled* Purposes which Men make in the Heats of their Passion; when they have

been *warm'd* by some pathetick Discourse, or *startled* by some great Danger, or *chas'd* into a Displeasure against their Sins by the Sense of some very dolorous Accident whereinto they have been betrayed by them; in these or such like Cases, it is usual with Men to make *hasty* Resolutions of Amendment, without considering either the *Matters* which they resolve upon, or the *Motives* which should support their Resolution; and so finding when they come to Practice, more Difficulty in the Matter than they were aware of, and having not sufficient Motives to carry them through it, their Resolution *flags* in the Execution, and very often *yields* to the next Temptation which encounters them.

Now though I do not deny but that those Heats of Passion are good Opportunities to *begin* our Religion in, and if *wisely* improved will very much contribute to our Voyage Heavenwards, and like a brisk Gale of Wind render it much more *expedite* and *easy*; yet if in these Heats we resolve too soon, without a due Consideration of all Particulars, and of the Difficulties on the one side, and the Arguments on the other, it is hardly possible that our Resolution should ever prove a lasting Principle of Goodness. For when we resolve *inconsiderately*, we resolve to do we know not *what*; and our Resolution includes a thousand Particulars that we are not *aware* of; most of which being repugnant to our vicious Inclinations, will when we come to practise them be attended with such Difficulties as will easily startle our weak Resolution; which having not a sufficient Foundation of Reason to support it, will

never

never be able to out-stand those boisterous Storms of Temptation whereunto it will be continually exposed. If therefore we mean our Resolution should *hold out*, and commence a living Principle of Goodness, we must found it in a thorough *Consideration* both of the *Duties* and *Difficulties* of Religion, and of the *Motives* which should engage us to embrace it; we must set before our Minds all the Sins we must *part with*, and all the Duties we must *submit to*, and fairly represent to ourselves all the Difficulties and Temptations wherewith we must *engage*; and as much as in us lies render them *actual* and *present* to us, by supposing ourselves *already* engaged in our Spiritual Warfare, and surrounded with all the Temptations both from within and without that we can reasonably expect will oppose themselves against us; and having thus placed ourselves in the midst of the Difficulties of Religion, we must never cease urging ourselves with the great Arguments and Motives of it, till we have thoroughly persuaded our stubborn Will, and obtained of them an explicit Consent to every Duty that calls for our Consent and Resolution.

III. To our good *Beginning* of the *Christian Warfare* it is also necessary that we be *deeply* and *thoroughly* convinced of our great need of a *Mediator* to make a Propitiation for our Sins, and render us acceptable to God. For it is to convince us of this necessary Truth that the Scripture doth so expressly declare, that as *there is one God*, so *there is one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. that *if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ*

the righteous, and that he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but for the Sins of the whole World; and that it is for his Name sake that our Sins are forgiven, 1 John ii. 1, 2, 12. that we have Redemption through his Blood, Eph. i. 7. and that without the shedding his Blood there is no remission, and that it was by the Sacrifice of himself that Christ put away Sin; Heb. ix. 22, 26. that we are accepted of God through his beloved Son, Eph. i. 6. that Christ is entered into Heaven now to appear in the Presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. and that there he ever lives to make Intercession for us, Heb. vii. 25. that it is through him that we have Access unto the Father, Ephes. ii. 18. and by him that we have Admittance to his Grace and Favour, Rom. v. 2. The Design of all which is, thoroughly to convince us of this great Truth, that by our Apostasy from God and Rebellion against him we have all rendred ourselves so very obnoxious to his Vengeance, that he would not pardon us upon any less *Atonement* than the precious Blood, nor admit us into Favour upon any less *Motive* than the powerful Intercession of his own Son; that by the Heinousness of our Guilt we have so highly incensed the Father of Mercies against us, that no less Consideration than the *Death* and *Advocation* of the greatest and dearest Person in the whole World will move him to admit of our Repentance, and listen to our Supplications. And certainly next to exacting the Punishment due to our Sins at our *own Hands*, the most dreadful Severity he could have expressed was to resolve not to remit it upon any other Consideration than that of his own Son's undergoing it in *our stead*; by which he hath
given

given us the greatest Reason that Heaven and Earth could afford to tremble at his Justice, even whilst we are inclosed in the Arms of his Mercy.

This therefore we ought to be deeply and thoroughly convinced of, that our Sins have set us at such a *distance* from God, that it is nothing but the Blood of Christ will *reconcile* him to us; and that though *without* our Repentance he will never be reconciled to us, yet it is not for the sake of that or any thing else *we* can do, that he will be induced to receive us into Favour, but only for the sake of that precious Sacrifice which his Eternal Son hath offered up for us. The firm *Persuasion* and *Consideration* of which will mightily *overawe* our Minds, and imprint upon them such *gastly* and *horrible* Apprehensions of Sin, as will *scare* us from all Thoughts of Compliance with it, the dreadful Demonstration which God hath given us of his righteous Severity against it in the very Reason of his pardoning it, will effectually *antidote* us against all our sinful Securities and Confidences: For this way of God's pardoning us upon the Sacrifice of his Son, guards his Mercy with such an awful Terror, as is sufficient to dishearten the most desperate Sinner from presuming upon it. For he that dares presume to sin on upon a Mercy that cost the Blood of the Son of God, hath Courage enough to *out-face* the Flames of Hell, and is not capable of any Mercy that the great God can indulge with Safety to his own Authority. For what Mercy can be safe from that Man's *Abuse* and *Presumption*, that dares abuse a Mercy so *guarded* and *secured* as this is,

by being founded upon such a dreadful Consideration ?

And as a thorough Persuasion of the Necessity of *Christ's Sacrifice* to the Forgiveness of our Sins will fill us with awful Apprehensions of the divine Severity, and set before us a most dismal Prospect of the vast Demerit of our Sin, both which are necessary to engage us to a thorough Reformation ; so a thorough Conviction of the Necessity of his *Intercession* to render our *Duties*, our *Prayers*, and *Persons* acceptable to God, will effectually *humble* and *abase* us in our own Eyes, which, as I shall shew you by and by, is highly conducive to a good *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare*. For, next to *banishing* us from his Presence *for ever*, the most effectual Course God could take to *abase* us was to exclude us from all *immediate* Intercourse with him, and not to admit of any more Addresses or Supplications from us, but only through the Hands of a *Mediator* ; which is a plain Demonstration how infinitely *pure* he is, and how *base* and *vile* our Sins have rendered us : insomuch that he will not suffer a sinful Creature to come near him otherwise than by a *Proxy*, that he will not accept of a *Service* from a guilty Hand, nor listen to a *Prayer* from a sinful Mouth, till it is first *hallowed* and *presented* to him by a *pure* and *holy* Mediator. So that unless we are strangely *inconsiderate*, we cannot but be touched with a deep Sense of our own *Vileness*, when we think at what a *Distance* the pure and holy God keeps us ; how he *stands off* at the Stench of our Abominations, and notwithstanding all his Benignity towards us, will neither *hear* us, nor have any thing to *do* with

with us, without the powerful *Intercession* of his own Son.

And as our Conviction of the Necessity we have of Christ's *Sacrifice* and *Intercession* is very apt to affect us with holy *Sorrow* and *Fear*, both which are very powerful Instruments of our Reformation; so our Persuasion of the Reality and Excellency of his *Mediation* is no less apt to inspire us with a mighty *Hope* and *Affurance* of Acceptance with God, if we reform and amend. For it seems that upon *propitiatory* Sacrifices and *interceding* Spirits, guilty Minds have been always inclined to place their Confidence of Acceptance with God. Hence it was a Principle generally received by Men of all Nations and Religions, (however it came to pass I know not,) that for sinful Men to appease the incensed Divinity it was necessary, first, that some *Life* should be *sacrificed* to him by way of *Satisfaction* for their Sins, and that the *nobler* it was, the more *propitious* it rendered him. 1. That some high Favourite of his should be prevailed with to *intercede* with him in their Behalf. Whereupon understanding by universal Tradition that there were a sort of *middle Beings* (whom they call *Demons*, and we *Angels*) between the sovereign God and Men, they began to address to *these*, and to bribe them with sacred Honours to *interpose* with God in their Behalf. And if they could make a shift to rely upon *Sacrifices*, the most precious of which were the Lives of sinful Men; and to depend upon *Intercessors* of whose Interest with God they had little or no Security; what a mighty Ground of Confidence and Assurance have we, for whom the Son of God

God once offered such a *meritorious* Sacrifice upon Earth, and continues to make such a *powerful* Intercession in Heaven? For besides that as he was a *spotless* and *innocent* Person, his Sacrifice was *wholly* meritorious for guilty Offenders; and besides that, as he was a Person of infinite *Value* and *Dignity*, his Sacrifice was meritorious for a *World*, of guilty Offenders; God, upon whose good Pleasure the *Admission* or *Refusal* of it intirely depended, has openly declared his Acceptation thereof as a Propitiation for the Sins of the *World*, and engaged himself by a *Publick Grant* and *Charter* of Mercy to indemnify for the sake of it every Sinner in the *World* that will but return to him by a serious and hearty Repentance; neither of which great things could ever be said of any *other* Sacrifice. And in the virtue of this *Sacrifice*, as well as of his own personal *Interest* with his Father, he now *intercedes* in our Behalf; and pleading our Cause, as he doth, with the Price of our Souls in his Hand, even his precious Blood by which he redeemed them, we may be sure that with that powerful *Oratory* he cannot fail of succeeding in our Behalf. For having *purchased* for us by his Blood, all those Favours which he *intercedes* for, he is invested with the Right and Power of *bestowing* them upon us. So that now, for our greater Security, all those Favours which God hath *promised* us, are actually *deposited* in the Hands of our *Mediator*; and though his bare Promise is in itself as great an Assurance as can be given us; yet it is to be considered that guilty Minds are naturally *anxious* and full of unreasonable *Jealousies*, and consequently whilst they

they looked upon God as their *adverse* Party, and a Party infinitely *offended* by them, would have been very prone to *suspect* the worst, had they had nothing but his bare Word to depend on. And therefore in condescension to this pitiable Infirmary of his sinful Creatures, he hath not only *promised* them his Acceptance and Favour upon Condition of their Return to him, but hath also put the *Performance* of his Promise into a *third Hand*, even into the Hand of a *Mediator*, who by the Nature of his Office, is *equally* concerned for both Parties; as well that God should perform his *Promise*, if we performed our *Duty*, as that we should perform our *Duty*, if we received the Benefit of his *Promise*. And hence, *Heb. vii. 22.* our Mediator is called the *Sponsor*, or *Surety of a better Covenant*. So that now we have no longer to do with God *immediately* as our adverse Party; but by a *Mediator*, who by his Office is obliged to be on *our* side as well as *God's*, and to take care that neither receive the *other's* part of the Covenant without performing his *own*. Thus as he hath been sometimes pleased in Compliance with human Weakness to enforce his *Promise* with his *Oath*, not that the *one* is in its own Nature a greater Security from God than the *other*, but because with *Men*, an *Oath* is more obliging than a *Promise*; so in great Condescension to the unreasonable *Diffidence* of our guilty Minds, he hath not only *promised* us Pardon and Acceptance upon our Repentance, but he hath also given us a *collateral Security* for the Performance of it, even the Security of a *Mediator*, in whose Hands he hath *deposited* whatsoever he hath

hath promised us. Not that *in itself* this is a greater Security than his own bare Word and Promise, which he cannot *falsify* without renouncing his Being : but because this way of giving Security by a *third Person* is more *accommodate* to the Method of our Covenants and Agreements with one another, and consequently more apt to satisfy our *anxious* and *diffident* Minds.

And thus the Conviction of our need of a *Mediator*, and the Persuasion of the *Reality* and *Excellency* of his Mediation will powerfully work both on our *Hope* and *Fear*, which are the main Springs of all our religious Endeavours ; and give us at once the most *horrible* Prospect of the Evil of Sin, and the most *comfortable* Assurance of Pardon and Acceptance with God upon our Repentance and Amendment ; both which are absolutely necessary to our successful *Entrance* into the *Christian Warfare*.

IV. To our *Beginning* of this *holy Warfare* it is also necessary that we should be affected with a deep *Sorrow* and *Shame* and *Remorse* for our past Iniquities. For this the Apostle calls *sorrowing to Repentance*, and tells us that *godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of*, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. and accordingly it is recorded of St. Peter's Converts, that the beginning of their Repentance was their being *pricked at the Heart*, Acts ii. 37. and even Repentance itself is in Scripture called a *broken and contrite Heart*, this being the most immediate Preparation to a true Repentance or Change of Mind, *Psal.* li. 17. And hence the ancient Penitents are described in Scripture as *girding them-*

themselves with Sackcloth, and repenting in Dust and Ashes; in Allusion to the ancient manner of *great and solemn Mournings*, which was to put on *Sackcloth*, cover the Head with *Ashes*, and sit in the *Dust*. And in the primitive and purest Ages of Christianity it is evident that the *bitterest Sorrows* and *Remorses* were looked upon as *necessary Preparations to Repentance*: for the *Penitents* in those Days, as *Tertullian* and *Nazianzen* describe them; “Lay prostrate at the Church Doors
“ in Sackcloth and Ashes, supplicating the Prayers
“ of the Presbyters and Widows, hanging on the
“ Garments and Knees of those that entered into
“ the Church, kissing their Footsteps, and with
“ Rivers of Tears in their Eyes beseeching their
“ Prayers to God for their Pardon.” Now though we are not under the Severities of such an *Ecclesiastical Discipline*, yet we are equally obliged with those ancient *Penitents* to exercise it *internally* in our Hearts. For Sin is as bad *now* as it was *then*, and as great an Evil in *us*, as it was in *them*; and therefore ought to be lamented by us with an *equal Sorrow* and *Remorse*. And indeed if we ever mean to wage War with it with Success, it is necessary we should acquire before-hand a thorough *Sense* and *Feeling* of the Evil of it; that we should *chastise* our Souls with some degree of that *bitter Sorrow* and *Regret* it deserves, and inflict upon ourselves some part of that Hell of infinite *Horror* and *Anguish* that is ingendering in its Womb: that so being the more *sensible* of its Malignity, we may be the more *enraged* against it, and enter the Lists with it with the greater *Resolution* and *Animosity*. For our Sorrow and Remorse
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for our Sins, if it be *serious* and *heartly*, will convert into *Hatred* and *Indignation* against them, and that *Hatred* will *animate* us in all our Conflicts with them, and render us more *obstinate* against their Terroures and Allurements. So that when in the Aftercourse of our Warfare against them, we are tempted afresh to *yield* and *comply* with them, the Remembrance of the past *Shame* and *Sorrow*, *Remorse* and *Confusion* we have undergone for *their* sakes, will render us far more *deaf* and *inexorable* than otherwise we should be to their Solicitations.

If therefore we would engage in this spiritual Warfare with Success, we must be often *reflecting* upon our past Sins, and *representing* them to ourselves in all their *aggravating* Circumstances. And when we have surveyed them *round about*, and considered them in all their natural *Turpitude*, *Disingenuity*, and *Indecency*, and applied them to ourselves with all their *appendant* Stings, *shameful* Effects, and *dismal* Circumstances, so that our Hearts begin to *feel* them, and to *smart* and *bleed* under the dolorous Sense of them; then must we pour them out before God in *sad* and *mournful* Confessions. For the very *Confession* of our Sins before so pure and great a Being, is in itself an effectual Means to encrease our Shame and Sorrow of them; and he must have a very hard Heart that can *ingenuously* and without any *Reserve* lay open his Crimes before the God of Heaven and Earth in all their *black* Aggravations, without being *stung* with a sensible Regret and Confusion; especially if he frequently repeat his Confessions as he ought to do.

V. To our successful *Beginning* of this our *Christian Warfare* it is also necessary that we earnestly *implore* the divine *Aid* and *Assistance* to enable us to go through with it. For God knowing how unable we are of *ourselves* to engage in this great Enterprize with that good Conduct that is necessary to give us any Probability of Success, hath promised us his own *Presence* and *Assistance* even from the *Beginning* to the *End* of it; and if in any part of it his Assistance be necessary, it is doubtless in the *Entrance*, which, as I shall shew you by and by, is by far the most *difficult* and *hazardous*. If therefore we presume to *enter* upon it without *supplicating* God to *second* us with his Grace and Assistance, we shall quickly find ourselves shamefully *foiled* and *defeated*. For though he hath promised to assist us, yet it is upon Condition that we earnestly *beg* and *seek* him; he will *give his Spirit*, but it is *to those that ask it*, Luke xi. 13. he will *draw near unto us*, but first *we must draw near unto him*, James iv. 8. and we are assured that *we shall have if we ask, that we shall find if we seek, and that it shall be opened to us if we knock*, Matt. vii. 7. And therefore we are bid to go *boldly to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in the time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. and not only to *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. v. 17. but *in every thing by Prayer and Supplication to let our Requests be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6. and if in every thing we ought to make known our Wants to him, then much more in this great and *difficult* Undertaking, in which it will be impossible for us to succeed without his heavenly Aid and Assistance.

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Wherefore as we hope for Victory in this our *spiritual Warfare*, we must earnestly implore his *Concurrence* with us, and beseech him to *second* us in all our weak Efforts and Endeavours. We must lay open our woful Case before him, and remonstrate to him that we are heartily *willing* to do what we are *able*, but that without him we are abundantly sensible all will be in *vain*. We must tell him that our Dependance is *upon* him, and that all our Hope of Success is *in* him; and that we dare not stir one Step *without* him; and beseech him that he will not *stand by*, and see us spend ourselves in *ineffectual* Strugglings, but that he will graciously stretch forth his *helping* Hand to us, and not suffer us to miscarry for want of his necessary *Assistance*. Which if we do, we may assure ourselves that the merciful God, who is the Father of our Spirits, will never *abandon* his own Offspring whilst it cries out to him, and with pitiful and bemoaning Looks implores his *Aid* and gracious *Co-operation*.

Whilst therefore we are thus endeavouring to prepare ourselves for our spiritual Warfare, we ought in every Act of Preparation to *look up* to God, and earnestly *supplicate* the Concurrence of his Grace and Spirit. While we are endeavouring to *believe*, we must beg him *to help our Unbelief*, to remove all *Prejudices* from our Minds, and present the Evidences of our Religion to our Understandings in a *clear* and *convincing* Light. When we are setting ourselves to a serious *Consideration*, we must beseech him to *fix* our Thoughts, to *suggest* to, and *repeat* his heavenly Motives and Arguments so fast and thick upon our Minds, that

no sinful or worldly Thought may be able to crowd in to *disturb* or *divert* our Meditations. When we are labouring to persuade ourselves of our Need, and the Reality of our Saviour's *Mediation*. we must earnestly intreat him to open our Eyes, and convince us effectually of the horrible *Danger* of our Sin, and of the infallible *Efficacy* of that blessed Remedy. When we are attempting to *affect* ourselves with the bitter Sense of our past Transgressions, we must implore him to strike in with us, and to inspire our Minds with such *piercing* and *powerful* Convictions of the infinite *Shame*, *Baseness*, and *Danger* of them, as may sting our *brawny* Consciencies to the quick, and dissolve our *frozen* Souls into a sorrowful Repentance ; that so when we enter the Lists and proceed to *Resolution*, which is the *Beginning* of our Spiritual Warfare, we may be armed against our Sins with such a lively *Faith*, such puissant *Considerations*, such *Horror* and *Animosity* against them, and such an assured *Hope* of being rescued from the fatal Issues and Effects of them, as that we may be able to promise ourselves a happy Success in the ensuing *Course* of our *Warfare* against them. And having thus fitted and accoutred ourselves for this great and momentous Enterprize.

VI. We are to enter into a serious and solemn *Resolution* of Amendment, of forsaking and renouncing all our Sins, and never returning to them more, whatsoever Temptations may *invite* or Difficulties *encounter* and *oppose* us. Which *Resolution* is in Scripture called μετάνοια, which we translate *Repentance*, but in strictness signifies a *Change of Mind*, or of Purpose and Resolution,

a renouncing our *sinful* Purposes, and solemnly engaging ourselves in a contrary Resolution of *living soberly and righteously and godly in this present World*. So that wheresoever the Precept of Repentance is expressed by this Word, the Meaning of it is, to oblige us to *change* the wicked *Purposes* of our Hearts into a firm and serious *Resolution* of forsaking all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and entirely resigning up ourselves to the Will and Disposal of God. And hence it is that μετανοεῖν and ἐπιστρέφειν, *i. e.* to *change* our Minds and *convert* or *turn* are in Scripture so often put together; the one denoting the *inward* Change of our Resolution, the other the *outward* Change of our Practice pursuant to it. So *Acts* iii. 19. *repent and be converted*, and *Acts* xxvi. 20. *that they should repent and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*; that is, that they should resolve to forsake their Sins, and submit to their Duty. and put their Resolution into Practice. And so that other word μεταμέλεια, which we also render *Repentance*, strictly signifies an *After-care*, that is pursuant unto this μετάνοια or *Change of Resolution*.

Now this Repentance or Change of Resolution is the *initial* Act of the Religion of Sinners, whereby they *resume* their inward Man from the Service of Sin. and *submit* and *resign* their Wills to God; whereby in Heart and Will they *forsake* the Devil's Colours, and list themselves *Volunteers* under the Banner of Christ. And being so, it ought to be performed with so much the more *Care* and *Preparation*. For the *Beginning* of all great Enterprizes is the *Ground* and *Foundation* of them; which if it be not firmly laid will be apt
to

to sink under the *Superstructures*, and to endanger their Ruin and Downfal. Now all the *foregoing* Duties being necessary Preparations to a good *Resolution*. we ought before we *resolve*, to spend a considerable Portion of Time in the diligent Practice of *them*; and not to resolve hand over head till we are duly and thoroughly prepared for it, till by exercising our *Faith* and *Consideration*, &c. we have broken and *tamed* our perverse and obstinate Wills, and thoroughly persuaded them to *part with* every Sin, and to *approve of*, and *consent to* every Duty that is comprehended in a thorough Resolution of Amendment. And if when we are about to *resolve*, we find upon a strict Examination any secret *Reserve* or *Exception* in our Wills, if there be any Lust which they are not thoroughly *persuaded* to part with, or any Duty to which they are not fully *reconciled*, we ought for that time to forbear *resolving*, and to go on in the Exercise of the *preparatory* Duties, till we find our reluctant Wills thoroughly *conquered* and *persuaded* by them. For if there be any *Leak* left open in our Resolution for any Sin to creep in at, *that* will be sure to insinuate in the next *Storm* of Temptation; and if it should not let in *other* Sins after it, as it is a thousand to one but it will, it will by its own *single* Weight sink us into eternal Perdition. Wherefore before ever we enter into the *Resolution* of Amendment, we ought to be very careful that our Wills be thoroughly *prepared* for it; that they be reduced to a fair *Compliance* with the Matter we are resolving upon, and effectually *dissuaded* out of all Resolution to the contrary; and when this is done, we may

cheerfully proceed to the forming of our good *Resolution*.

Which ought to be performed by us, between God and ourselves, with the greatest *Seriousness* and *Solemnity*. For now our *Hearts* being ready, we are to betake ourselves to our *Knees*, and in these, or such like words, to devote ourselves to God, *O thou blessed Author of my Being, I am now fully convinced, that I owe myself to thee by a thousand Ties and Obligations, and am infinitely sorry and ashamed that I have so long sequestred and withdrawn myself from thee to serve my own base Lusts and Affections. Wherefore now in thy dread Presence, and in that of thy holy Angels, I here entirely resign up myself unto thee, and do resolve without any Reserve or Exception, that whatsoever Temptations I may meet with for the future, I will never wilfully withdraw or alienate myself from thee more. From henceforth I heartily renounce all my Sins, and particularly those that have been most dear and pleasant to me, and do faithfully promise to continue thy true and loyal Subject as long as I breath, and that whatsoever Invitations I may have to the contrary, I will never revoke the Resolution I now make, or any part of it. So help me, O my God.*

And having thus solemnly resolved, it will be highly necessary that for the farther *Ratification* of it, we should yet more solemnly repeat it in the *holy Sacrament*; wherein, according to the Custom of *Feasts* and *Sacrifices*, God and every faithful Communicant do *mutually* re-oblige themselves to one another, and upon the sacred Symbols of the Body and Blood of Jesus to *ratify* to each other, each other's Part of that everlasting

Covenant

Covenant which by the Federal Rite of his meritorious Death and sacrifice was inviolably *sealed and confirmed*. So that when we take those holy Elements into our Hands, which the Priest in God's stead presents and offers to us, we do in effect make this solemn Dedication of ourselves to God; *here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our Souls and Bodies to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee; and here we call to witness this sacred Blood that redeemed us, and those vocal Wounds which do now intercede for us, that from henceforth we oblige ourselves never to start from thy Service, what Difficulties soever we may encounter in it, or what Temptations soever we may have to forsake it, And having thus resolved and confirmed our Resolutions by the Body and Blood of our Saviour, and taken the Sacrament upon it not to depart from what we have resolved, we have actually listed and ingaged ourselves in a Warfare against Sin, the World, and the Devil, upon the final Success whereof our everlasting Fate depends. And thus you see what Duty is implied in the Beginning or Entrance of this Warfaring part of the Life of a Christian.*

S E C T. II.

Wherein some Motives are urged to persuade Men to the Practice of those Duties that are proper to the Beginning of the Christian Warfare.

HAVING in the former Section, given a brief Account of those Duties which are necessary to the well *Beginning* of our *Christian Warfare*, I

I shall now, for a close of that Argument, endeavour to *press* and *persuade* those who have not as yet *begun*, to enter immediately upon it, by putting in practice these *Initial Duties* of it. You who have been hitherto *warring* against God, and *striving* against your Duty and your Happiness, be at last persuaded to *make a Stand* for a while, and to *listen* to the Voice of Reason and Religion, which do both call aloud to you to *face about*, to *desert* the Party wherein you are engaged, and *come over* to the Side of Virtue. And that I may, if possible, prevail, I do here earnestly beseech you, even by all that is *dear* and *precious* to you, by the Love of God, and by the Lives of your Souls, and by all your hopes of Happiness in the World to come, seriously to consider with me these following *Motives*.

1. That there is a vast *Necessity* of beginning this our spiritual Warfare *one time or other*.

2. That it is unspeakably most *secure* and *advantageous* for us to begin now.

3. That the *final Success* of it doth very much depend upon the well *Beginning* of it

4. That when once we have well *begun* it, the main *Difficulty* of it is conquered.

I. Consider the vast *Necessity* there is of beginning this spiritual Warfare *one time or other*. For that which is necessary for us to accomplish *at last*, is necessary to be undertaken by us *one time or other*. Now it is necessary for us to *oppose* and *vanquish* the Temptations of the World, and the Corruptions of our own Nature, as it is *not to go to Hell*, or *not to miss of Heaven*. For in this great
Battle

Battle the everlasting Fate of our Souls is to be decided, and if we come off *Victors*, we are *made*, if *vanquished*, we are *undone* to Eternity. So that in this Spiritual Warfare we do not contend like the Warriors of this World for a Triumphal Wreath that will *wither* upon our Brows, or for Fame and Renown which is nothing but the *Breath* of a Company of *talking People*, or for the enlarging of our Empire over the next *Handful* of a *Turf*; but we are contending with Enemies that are pursuing us to *Hell*, and binding us in Chains of *everlasting Darkness*. We are to fight for our *Immortality*, for all our Hopes of Happiness and Well-being in a *never ending* Life; and when so much depends upon the Success of our Conflict, and we must *conquer* and be *crowned*, or *die*; *win* the Field, and Heaven, or yield ourselves *Captives* to eternal Misery, I leave you to judge whether we are not obliged under the vastest *Necessity* one time or other to *begin*. And if we must begin *one time or other*, why not *now* as well as *hereafter*? And to what purpose should we *defer* entering upon that Work, which we all confess we must *at last* not only *begin* but *accomplish*? For to have *accomplished* a necessary Work, especially when it is *difficult* and *important*, is a great *Satisfaction* to the Mind; and whereas while it is yet to *do*, the Prospect of the *Pain* and *Labour* of it creates in us a great deal of *Trouble* and *Anxiety*; when once it is *done*, or the main Difficulty of it is *over*, every Reflection on our past Pains *sweetens* our present Repose, and *crowns* it with Joy and Triumph. And thus it is in our *Entrance* in the *Christian Life*, which we all confess to be both *necessary* and

difficult ; and it being so, what do we else by our *delaying* it, but only *prolong* the Pain and Trouble of it ? And whereas by one *brave* Attempt we might *ease* ourselves, and set our Souls at *Rest* for ever ; we *languish* away our Life in Misery, and are *sick* with the Fear of our *Remedy*. Just like poor Men that are under the Torment of the *Stone*, they know they must be *cut* or *die*, but out of a frightful Apprehension of their Remedy they put it off *from time to time* ; they promise they will *endure* it rather than *lose* their Lives, but when they come to the Trial, their Hearts fail, and they must needs have a little longer Respite ; but *all the while* they endure not only the *Pain* of their *Disease*, but also the *Apprehensions* of their *Cure*, which *at last* they must also actually *endure*, or *Death*, which is much more terrible to them. Whereas had they been cut *at first*, they might have saved themselves all that Torment, and Fear of *farther* Torment, which they endured in the time of their *Delay*. And just thus it is with those who *defer* their Repentance, which had they begun *at first* when they fell into their sinful Courses, their Hearts might have been at Ease a *great while* ago, and they might have saved themselves all those *Gripes* and *Twinges* of Conscience, and all those *painful* Apprehensions of the Smart and Difficulty of repenting *at last*, which they have been forced to endure in the several Periods of their Delay. But alas, Repentance is a *sad* Remedy ! Well, be it never so *sad*, you know you must endure it, or that which is a thousand times *worse*. Why then you will endure it, that you are resolved upon, but fain you would have a little *longer* Respite.

Ah

Ah foolish Souls ! why will you *prolong* your Misery, and *linger* out your Lives in Torment, when as by enduring *now* what you must endure *at last*, you might be presently at Ease, not only from the *Pain* of your *past* Guilt, but from the *Fear* of your *future* Repentance.

II. Consider that it is unspeakably more *secure* and *advantageous* for us to begin our Christian Warfare *now*. For *this* Life is the only time of our Trial and Probation, the Field in which our spiritual warfare is to be fought, and from which we must all go off triumphing *Conquerors*, or eternal *Slaves*. And alas such a *slippery* and *uncertain* thing is this our present Existence, that there is no one part of it we can call *our own*, but what is present. For all our *Futurity* is in God's Hand and Disposal, and how he will *shorten* or *prolong* it we are not able to prognosticate. So that for ought we know the next Moment may finally determine our everlasting Fate, and the Hopes of Eternity, which are now in our Hands may slip through our Fingers before To-morrow Morning, and leave us desperate for ever. What a dreadful Venture therefore do those Men run, that *delay* from time to time the *securing* their Salvation by a timely Repentance ? When it is *now* in their own Power, would they but lay hold on the *present* Opportunity, to secure their Victory and Crown, they rather chuse to go to *cross* or *pile* for them, and to stake them upon a Contingency that is not in their Power to dispose of.

But suppose they could secure that *hereafter* to themselves, to which they do so venturously defer
their

their Repentance, yet still there is another Venture of which they can *never* be secure, and that is, whether when that *hereafter* comes, God will not, out of a just Resentment of their present Despite to, and Contempt of his Grace, *withdraw* it from them. Which if he should, they would be left in as great an Incapacity of repenting, as if he had withdrawn their *Lives* from them; it being as possible for us to repent without *Life* when we are *dead*, as without God's *Grace* while we are *living*. So that promising that we will repent hereafter, we promise not only for *ourselves*, but for *God* too; we promise that *he* shall wait *our* Leisure, and dance Attendance after us through all the tedious Stages of our Delays and Procrastinations; that he shall tamely put up all those Affronts and Provocations which between *this* and our *hereafter* we are resolved to offer him, and in the End be as much at our Beck, and as ready to come in to our Assistance, when we shall think fit to call for him, as if we had never given him the least Offence or Provocation to the contrary. For unless we can secure ourselves of this, it will be every whit as uncertain whether we *repent* hereafter if we *live*, as whether we *live* hereafter to *repent*. And what a Madness is it for Men that have now their *Lives* and Souls in their own Hands, to stake and venture them upon two such contingent Issues, that are both of them so far out of their Power and Disposal?

But suppose there were no Hazard in either of these; that we were as secure both of our own *Lives* and God's Grace, as we are of the present Moment, yet we can never hope to begin our
Christian

Christian Warfare so *advantageously* as now. For all the time we are deferring it, our Enemies are gathering Strength, and mustering up their Forces against us; our bad Inclinations are *ripening* and *improving*, and our evil Habits are growing more *inveterate*; and so many Degrees of Strength as *these* get, *we* lose; and so proportionably as their Power to *offend* us increases, ours to *defend* ourselves against them decreases. What a Madness therefore is it for Men, who pretend to be resolved to engage in the Christian Warfare, to *defer* it as they do from time to time, when they cannot but be sensible, if they take any Notice of themselves, how much every further Delay *improves* their *Lusts*, and *impairs* their *Reason*, how it *fortifies* their Enemy, and *weakens* themselves? You say you are convinced of the *Necessity* of this Warfare, and *resolved* to undertake it *one time or other*, though *as yet* you cannot prevail with yourselves to enter upon it. And why nor yet; why for some Reason or other forsooth you find yourselves averse to it; and do you imagine that if you are averse to it *to Day*, you will be less averse to it *to Morrow* or *next Day*? No, fond Men, do not abuse yourselves, for if you will not enter upon it *now*, be assured of this, you will never find yourselves either so *willing* to it, or so *fit* and *able* for it again, as long as you live. For your Lusts will grow every Day dearer and dearer to you, and so *twine* and *wrap* themselves by Degrees about your Hearts and Affections, that you will every Day find yourselves more and more unwilling to part with them; and at last they will *cling* so fast, that there will be no pulling them from ye
with-

without putting away your Souls with them. Wherefore talk no more, I beseech you, of repenting *hereafter*, but resolve once for all, that you will repent *now or never*.

III. Consider the *final Success* of this your spiritual Warfare doth very much depend upon your *well beginning* of it. By what hath been said you plainly see, there is an absolute Necessity of beginning it *one time or other*, and that you can never begin it so *securely* and *advantageously* as *now*; but unless you begin it *well* now, that is with a thorough Preparation of Heart, you were even as good sit still and not begin *at all*. For when once you come to the Trial, to encounter the Oppositions of a corrupt Nature, and contend with the Difficulties of a holy Life, you will then quickly find your sappy Resolutions sink, and like so many rotten Banks yield and give way at every spring-tide of Temptation. But as the well laying the *Foundations* of a House secures the *Superstructures* against the Violence of all future Storms and foul Weather; so the first settling of your Resolution upon a *firm* and *stedfast* Basis will be a mighty Safeguard to it, against all ensuing Storms of Temptation. That well-grounded *Faith* and thorough *Consideration* which induced us to it, will go along with it, and guard it through the Enemies Quarters with such invincible Reasons as no sinful Motive will be able to disprove or cope with. That hearty *Shame* and bitter *Sorrow* and *Regret* which we felt in the forming our Resolution will animate and render it more firm and inexorable against all the Sollicitations of Sin for the future. Those fervent and earnest *Prayers* which

which preceded and accompanied it ; will not only ingage *us* to take the more *Care* and *Regard* of it, but ingage *God* also to contribute more *Aid* and *Assistance* to it in all its ensuing *Conflicts* and *Encounters*. And when in the framing of our *Resolution* we have taken effectual *Care* before-hand not to resolve *upon* any thing but what we have considered the *Difficulty* of, or *against* any thing but what we have felt the *Shame* and *Smart* of, or upon any *Reason*, but what we have thoroughly *pondered*, and do firmly *believe*, and together with all this, have engaged by our earnest *Prayers* the *God* of all *Grace* to aid and assist us, we may with some *Assurance* promise ourselves a blessed *Issue* and *Success*, For now we are *forewarned* of, and *forearmed* against all that can happen to us in our spiritual *Warfare* ; now there is no *Difficulty* can arise in our way which we did not *foresee* and *provide against* when we first set forward to *Heaven*. So that if from henceforth we do but take an honest *Care* to watch the *Motions* of our *Enemy*, and to keep up our own *Hearts* and *Courage*, we cannot miss of a glorious *Victory*, and after that an everlasting *Triumph*,

But if we make a *rash* Beginning, and resolve *precipitantly* without observing the above-named *Rules* and *Directions*, in all Probability our *hasty* Purposes will end in a *leisurely* Repentance. So that unless we intend to take a great deal of Pains in Religion to no purpose, to weave a *Penelope's* Web, and *do* and *undo* as long as we live, and only to dance round in an eternal Circle of *sinning* and *resolving against* it, *resolving* and *sinning* again, without ever making a Step *forward*, but still
wheeling

wheeling about to the same Point ; let us now at last resolve to *begin* in that *prudent* Method which God hath prescribed us.

IV. Consider that when once we have *begun* it *well*, we have conquered the *main* Difficulty of this our spiritual Warfare. For though it be an easy matter to begin *ill*, to resolve against our Sins in a *sudden* Pet, or *transient* Heat of Passion ; yet it must be confessed that to resolve *well* and *wisely*, that is, with that firm *Belief* and thorough *Consideration* of things, with that *Shame* and *Sorrow* and those earnest *Cries* to Heaven for Aid and Assistance, which are necessary to the founding of a *strong* and *lasting* Resolution, is not so easy a matter. For in all those preparatory Exercises, we have a *roving* Mind, a *hard* Heart, and a *perverse* Nature to contend with ; and we shall find it a very hard matter to call in our *wandering* Thoughts, and unite them together into a *fixed* and *steady* Consideration of the Evidences of the Truth of Religion, and of the Duties and Motives and Difficulties of it. And whilst we are entertaining them with this *unwonted* Argument, there are a thousand Objects with which they are better *acquainted*, that will be calling them away ; so that without a great deal of Violence to ourselves we shall never be able to keep them *together* so long as is necessary to the forming a firm *Assent* to the *Truth*, and the passing a true and impartial *Judgment* upon the *Proposals* of Religion. And when we have fixed our Thoughts into a serious Consideration of the *Evidences* of Religion, we shall find that our *Lusts* will object much more against them than our *Reason* ; that
they

they will be casting *Mists* before our Eyes, and *briling* and *biassing* our Understanding the other way, and that thereupon it will be more difficult than we are aware to convince ourselves thoroughly of the Truth of a Religion that is so diametrically opposite to our vicious Inclinations. But when this is done, and we proceed to consider the *Duties* of Religion, and to balance the Motives with the Difficulties of them, in order to the obtaining of ourselves a *full* and *free* Consent to them; here again we shall find ourselves at a mighty Plunge. For though the Motives to our Duty are at first View infinitely *greater* and more *considerable* than the Difficulties of it; though it be unspeakably more *intolerable* to lose the Joys of Heaven, and incur the Pains of Hell than to indure the *sharpest* Brunts of this Spiritual Warfare; yet *these* being *present* and *sensible* have a more immediate Access to us, and consequently are apter to move us than either of those Motives which are both of them *future* and *invisible*. So that unless we do earnestly *press* and *urge* ourselves with *those* Motives, and imprint them upon our Minds in the most *lively* and *real* Characters, we shall find ourselves overruled in despite of them by *these* present and sensible Difficulties that are before us. But when we have *effectually* convinced ourselves that those Difficulties of our Duty are much less considerable than the Motives to them, we shall find it a hard Task to persuade our Wills into a *free* and *explicit* Consent to all the *Particulars* of it. For now we shall find a strong *Aversion* in our Natures to *sundry* of those Duties that call for our *Approbation*, and there will be a mighty Counterstriving

striving between our *Reason* and *Inclinations*. Our darling Lusts, those bosom Orators within us, will now employ all their Rhetorick to dissuade us from parting with them; they will *clasp* about our Souls, like *departing* Lovers, and use all their *Charms* and *Allurements* to hold us fast, and reconcile themselves to us; and under these Circumstances, though we have all the reason in the World on our side, we shall find it will be no such easy matter effectually to dispose our Wills to *close* with so many *offensive* Duties, and *part* with so many *beloved* Sins. But when *this* is done, which to be sure will cost us many a violent *Struggle* and *Contention* with ourselves, there are *other* Difficulties to be mastered. For now we must *reflect* upon our past ill Life, and expose it to our own Eyes in all its natural *Horror*, *Turpitude*, and *Infamy*, and never leave *reproaching* ourselves with the *Foulness* and *Disingenuity*, the *Madness* and *Folly* of it, till we find our Hearts affected with *Shame* and *Sorrow* for, and *Indignation* against it. And for us that have been so long used to *coax* and *flatter* ourselves, to *paint* and *varnish* our Deformities, and crown our Brows with *forced* and *undeserved* Applauses, for *us* to *condemn* and *upbraid* ourselves, to strip our Actions of all their *artificial* Beauty, and set ourselves before our own Eyes in all our *naked*, *undisguised* Ugliness, and not look off till we have lookt ourselves into *Shame* and *Horror* and *Hatred* of ourselves, will be, at first especially, a very *ungrateful* Employment; and yet it may be a good while perhaps before our *hard* and *unmalleable* Hearts will yield to the Impressions of *Godly Sorrow* and *Remorse*, But when
this

this Difficulty is conquered, or Work is not yet *totally* finished. For now we must *come off* from ourselves and all our *presumptuous* Dependences upon our own Ability and Power, and in a deep Sense of our own most wretched *Weakness* and *Impotency* throw ourselves wholly upon God, and with *earnest* and *importunate* Outcries implore his gracious Aid and Assistance. And let me tell ye, to Men that have been all along inured to such *glorious* Conceits of themselves, such *mighty* Confidences in their own Abilities ; that have promised themselves from time to time that at *such* and *such* a time they would repent and amend. as if without God's help it were in *their* Power to repent when they *pleased* ; for such Men as these, I say, to come out of themselves and their own *Self-confidences*, and wholly cast themselves upon a foreign Help ; so sensibly to *feel*, and ingenuously to *own* their own Inability, as to fly to God, and confess themselves *lost* and *undone* without him, is a much harder matter than we can well imagine till we come to make the Experiment. And yet this, all *this*, must be done before we can be well prepared to *resolve* upon the Christian Warfare.

This I have the longer insisted on, because I would deal *plainly* with you, and shew you the *worst* of things. For whether you are told of it or no, you will find it, if ever you make the Experiment, that all your good *Resolutions* without these *Preparations* will soon unravel in the *Execution* ; and that after you have resolved a thousand times over you will be just where you are, and not one step farther in Religion. But for your Encou-

agement, know that when with *these* necessary Preparations you have *solemnised* your Resolution, you have won the *main* and *toughest* Victory in all your spiritual Warfare; a Victory by which you have *pulled down* your Sin from its Throne, and *broken* and *disarrayed* its Power and Forces, so that now you are upon the Pursuit of a *flying* Enemy, and if you do but diligently *follow* your Blow, and *pursue* your brave Resolution through all Temptations to the contrary, and do not suffer your vanquished Enemy to *rally* and reinforce himself against ye, you will sensibly perceive his Strength decay, and those Lusts which seemed at first *invincible*, will languish away by degrees from *weak* to *weaker*, till at last they expire into the Habits of their contrary Virtues; and so proportionably those Virtues which through our vicious Averfations to them seemed at first *impossible*, will grow on by degrees from *possible* to *easy*, and from *easy* to *necessary*; and then the *Sins* will be more impossible to us than the *Virtues*.

Now what a mighty Encouragement is this to make a *good-Beginning* of the Christian Warfare, that in so doing we are sure to conquer the *main* Difficulty of it; that when we have broke through all those Oppositions that lie in the way to a wise and good Resolution, we are past the *Frontiers* of Religion, and having gotten over those steep *Alps*, at its Entrance shall be sure to find the Region round about a plain and easy *Champaign*, in which the further we go, the *smoother* it will be, and so smoother and smoother, till at last it will be all *sweet* and *delightful*, like the flowery Walks of Paradise.

Paradise. Let us therefore be persuaded, without any farther Delay, to enter *immediately* upon this our holy Warfare, and by *Faith* and *Consideration*, &c. to lay the Foundations of a religious Resolution; that so when we are actually ingaged against our spiritual Enemies we may be able to *stand our Ground* against all Temptations, and that having finally *conquered* and *subdued* them, we may receive that Immortal Crown which God the righteous Judge hath laid up for the *victorious*.

And so I have done with the *First* Part of our *Christian Warfare*, viz. our *Entrance* into it.

S E C T. III.

Concerning the Second Part of the Christian Warfare; with a particular Account of the Duties thereunto appertaining.

I Shall now proceed to the *Second* Part of our *Christian Warfare*, viz. the *Course* and *Progress* of it, which consists in *holy living*. For when once we have reduced our Wills to a *firm* and *well-grounded* Resolution of *entring* into this militant State, that which is next incumbent upon us is to *pursue* our Resolution in the future Course of our Lives and Actions, that is, to *abstain* from all Sin, and endeavour to *mortify* our Inclination to it, and to *practise* all the contrary Graces and Virtues, and endeavour to *improve* them to farther and farther degrees of Perfection; or as the Scripture expresses it, *to cease to do evil*, and to

learn to do well; to *strive* against Sin, and to *die* to it, and to *grow in Grace* and *perfect Holiness in the fear of God*. In this consists the *Course* and *Progress* of our *Christian Warfare*. In order whereunto it is indispensably necessary that we should still *repeat* the Practice of those Duties by which we were first *prepared* to enter into it: all those means by which our good Resolution was *produced*, being naturally conducive to *maintain* and *support* it. And therefore we find that *Faith* and *Consideration*, &c. are not enjoined as *temporary* Duties, that are only to be practised in the *Beginning* of our Warfare, but as means that will be *always* necessary for us throughout our whole *Progress* to Heaven. For so we are commanded, not only to *acquire* a sincere Faith or Belief of the Gospel, but to *continue* and *be established in it*, Col. i. 2, 3. compared with Chap. ii. 7. And so again we are enjoined not only to *admit* the Proposals of Religion into our Consideration, but to *keep them there*, Luke viii. 15. and suffer them to *dwell richly in us*, Col. iii. 16. And so for all those other preparatory Duties. For that from a hearty Conviction of our need of Christ we should beg all Mercies of God in his *Name*, and for his *sake*, is a standing Precept of Christian Devotion, John xvi. 24. and so is also *Confession* of our Sins to God, 1 John i. 9. and *Prayer* for his Grace and Assistance, Col. iv. 2. Nor is it only required that we should *once* repent or change our bad Resolution for a good one, but that we should also *repeat* and *confirm* our good Resolution; that we should *stablish our Hearts*, that is, keep our Wills *fixed* and *determined* to all good Intentions
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and Purposes, *James* v. 8. and *stand fast in the Lord*, that is, adhere to the Profession and Practice of Christianity with a *firm* and *constant* Resolution, *Phil.* iv. 1. For to *proceed* in our Christian Warfare, is *constantly* to live up to our good Resolution, which will require a continued Application of those Means by which we were first *prepared* and *disposed* to enter into it. Thus Faith is no less necessary to enable us to *perform*, than it was to prepare us to *make* our good Resolution; and still the more we *believe* our Religion, the more we shall think ourselves concerned in its Proposals, and consequently the more firmly we shall be resolved to *close with*, and *embrace* them; and so still as our Faith *improves* in degrees of Certainty, our Resolution will proportionably *grow* stronger and stronger. Again, if it were necessary to the *Birth* of our Resolution that we should first duly *weigh* and *consider* the Motives and the Difficulties of the Duties we were resolving on, then it will be no less necessary to the *Growth* and *Improvement* of it, that we should frequently consider over these motives and Difficulties *again*, and balance them one against another. And at first especially, while our good Resolution is yet in its *Infancy*, it will be very necessary that we should every Day before we go abroad into the World spend some Portion of Time in *fore-thinking* of the many Temptations that do lie in wait for us, whether in our *Business* or *Company*, or necessary *Refreshments* and *Diversions*; and *fore-arming* ourselves against them with the Motives and Arguments of our Religion; that so we may have our Weapons ready whenever they shall assault us, and be

always provided to resist them. Again, if it were necessary to the *forming* our Resolution, that we should be *convinced* of the Necessity and Reality of our Saviour's *Mediation*, then it will be no less necessary to the *Performance* of it that our Hope and Fear, which are the Springs of our Action, should still be excited by the *glorious* Assurance of Mercy and *horrid* Prospect of Sin which this *Conviction* implies. Once more, was it necessary to the *well making* of our Resolution, that we should affect ourselves before hand with a hearty *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our past Transgressions, then will it be no less necessary for the *strengthening* and *confirming* it, that we should ever and anon *revive* this our Shame and Grief, by reflecting on the Filthiness of our *past* State, and the weakness and Imperfection of our *present*, and by an ingenuous *Confession* of both to the high and holy God; that so our *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our Sins being digested into *Anger* and *Displeasure*, may sharpen our Resolution, and *animate* it more and more against them. In short, if it be necessary to the *founding* of our Resolution, that we should first earnestly *implore* the divine Grace and Assistance, then it will be no less necessary for the *continuance* of it, that for the same purpose we should continually apply ourselves to the Throne of Grace; that we should every Morning commit ourselves to God's Grace and Protection, and never presume to venture among the Snares of the World without him; that we should count it as unsafe for us to go out of our Chambers without being armed with God's Aid, as it is to rush *naked* into a Battle amongst Swords and Spears: In a word that we
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should every Morning and Evening *at least*, recommend ourselves to God, and beseech him to defend us against all those *Terrors* and *Allurements* which either the *Devil* or our own *Lusts* shall propose to withdraw us from our good Resolution. And if upon all these preparatory Exercises of our *Faith*, *Consideration*, &c. it was at first necessary for us to enter into a solemn *Resolution*, it will be no less necessary that with the same continued Preparations we should frequently *iterate* and *renew* it ; especially *at first*, till the Strength of our bad Inclinations is in some measure *broken* and *abated*. Now we should take care to go every Day out of our Chambers *fresh* armed, as Men that expect an Enemy at the Threshold ; and not to trust our *weak* Souls among the Temptations of the World till we have first *chained* up our Inclinations with *new* Vows of fidelity. So that you see the Duties of our *Entrance* into the Christian Warfare are not so *peculiar* to that State, but that they are also to be practised in the *Course* and *Progress* of it.

But then besides *these*, there are sundry *others* that are necessary to our successful *Progress* therein. All which I shall reduce to these following Heads :

1. That we take care to arm ourselves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Trouble* and *Difficulty* of it.

2. That we *propose* to ourselves the most excellent *Examples*.

3. That we apply ourselves to our *Spiritual Guides* for Direction.

4. That we be very curious of our *Aims* and *Intentions*.

5. That we should possess our Minds with a *lively* Sense and *awful* Apprehensions of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us.

6. That we frequently *examine* and *review* our own *Actions*.

7. That we be very *watchful* and *circumspect* in the *Conduct* and *Management* of ourselves.

8. That we shall betake ourselves to some *honest Calling*, and behave ourselves *diligently* and *industriously* therein.

9. That we should endeavour after a *cheerful* Frame of Spirit.

10. That we should maintain in our Minds a constant *Sense* and *Expectation* of *Heaven*.

11. That we should live in the constant use of the *external Ordinances* and *Institutions* of our Religion.

I. To the *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare, it is necessary that we arm ourselves with *Patience* and *Courage* to undergo and encounter the *Troubles* and *Difficulties* of it. For so we are commanded to *be strong in the Lord*, Ephes. vi. 10. and to *be strong in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. that is, to *fortify* ourselves with the Grace of God and the Motives of Religion against all those *Hardships* and *Oppositions* which may rise up against us in our March to Heaven: for we are assured before-hand that *we have need of Patience*, that *after we have done the Will of God we may receive the Promise*, Heb. x. 36. and therefore we are bid to *strengthen ourselves with all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness*, Col. i.

Col. i. 11. and to run with Patience the Race that is set before us, Heb. xii. 1.

For though it is certain that when we have well and wisely *resolved*, the *greatest* Difficulty of our spiritual Warfare is over, yet it cannot be dissimbled that even when this is *performed*, and we proceed from hence to *Execution*, there will, *at first* especially, arise such Difficulties and Oppositions in our way as will sufficiently try our *Courage* and *Patience*. And though if when we were forming our Resolution we considered the whole matter, we could not but *Foresee* great Difficulties in the Execution of it, and be very sensible what strong Inclinations from *within* and Temptations from *without* we are to *struggle* and *contend* with; yet alas, the Difficulties of all Undertakings are usually much less in our *Foresight*, than in our *Sense* and *Experience* of them. For while they are in our Foresight we have only the *Notions* and *Ideas* of them to encounter, and these being not so stubborn as *the things themselves*, are much more easily conquered by us. So that when instead of our own *easy* and *compliant* Notions we come to contend with the Difficulties *themselves*, we very often find the Face of things quite *changed*, and those Difficulties which did so easily *submit* to our *Apprehensions*, do many times make an obstinate *Resistance* to our *Endeavours*. And thus many times it is in the matter in hand, So that when we are *fore-casting* the Difficulties of Religion in our Minds, we must always allow for the *Distance* of them, which usually *lessens* their Appearance, and conclude with ourselves, that when we are *actually* engaged with them we *find* them
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much more *stiff* and *incompliant* to our *Endeavours* than they are now to our *Thoughts*, and accordingly *prepare* and *arm* ourselves against them. For when from *considering* we proceed to *encounter* them, we must expect to find that to *discourse* and *execute* are things of a widely different Nature; and that those Difficulties which we so easily *vanquished* in our *Thoughts* and *Discourses*, will when we are actually *contending* with them put us to a much harder Trial of our *Valour* and *Constancy* than we were aware of.

For if we should have nothing but our own bad Inclinations and the ordinary Temptations of the World to struggle with, yet even *these* we shall find sufficient to exercise our utmost *Patience* and *Constancy*, For we must not expect that our bad Inclinations. especially after they have been *pampered* and *improved* by a long and frequent Repetition of *forbidden* Enjoyments, will be presently *subdued* and *mortified*, when there are so many Temptations all around us continually *exciting* and *provoking* them. No, you may be assured they will *struggle* for their Lives before they give up the Ghost, and if they are deeply radicated, will not be torn from their Roots without a great deal of *Time* and *Labour*. So that unless you have a *great* Stock of *Patience* and *Courage* to *endure* and *outstand* their tedious Resistances to your pious Endeavours, and to deny them those vicious Satisfaction which they *feed* and *live* upon, till you have *starved* them out, you will quickly be *weary* of contending with them, and rather chuse to yield them their *Desires*, than be plagued with their restless importunities.

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But then besides these *ordinary* Difficulties of denying your sinful Desires and Inclinations, it may be your Lot to *take up the Cross* too, and to follow your Saviour through a dark Lane of *Sufferings* and *Persecutions*; and then you will need a *world* of Patience and Courage to undergo all that *Shame* and *Reproach*, *Loss* and *Pain*, *Fear* and *Suffering*, through which you must fight your way to Heaven if ever you come there. Since therefore this *may* happen to ye, and is not altogether *unlikely*, it concerns ye, as ye hope for Heaven, to *fore-arm* and *prepare* yourselves against it, So that our Christian Warfare exposing us, as it doth, to so many *certain* and *probable* Difficulties, it is not without reason that the Apostle exhorts us to be *stedfast* and *immovable*, *always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, *forasmuch as we know that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*.

II. To the *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare it is necessary that we *propose* to ourselves the most excellent *Examples*. For Experience tells us, that good *Example* hath a stronger Influence upon Men than good *Precepts* or *Counsels*; and the reason is plain, because he that only gives others good Advice or Instructions, doth not give them that Security that he believes *himself*, as he that *seconds* his Counsel with his own Example. For they who are instructed, do in a great measure depend upon the Judgment and Authority of their Teachers, and therefore must have a reasonable *Security* that their Teachers do believe *themselves* before they will be induced to *believe* and *comply* with what they are taught; and such a Security
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is not to be fetcht so much from their *Words* as from their *Actions*. But when by their *Examples* they *transcribe* their own *Doctrines*, it is visible they are in *earnest*; and that is a probable Argument to their Disciples that their *Doctrine* is *true*. So that good Example teaches with greater *Force* and *Authority* than good *Doctrine* can do, because it more *sensibly* confirms what it teaches, and doth at the same time *direct* us *what* to do, and by a very popular Argument *prove* that we *ought* to do it. Besides, when the Matter which the Teacher advises or enjoins is *hard* and *difficult*, he ought, for the Encouragement of those whom he teaches, to give them a full Assurance that it is *practicable*; which no Argument will so *effectually* do as his own Example. For when they see that he himself *practises* what he *teaches*, that is an *ocular* Demonstration to them that it is *practicable*. So that good Example carries in it this strong Encouragement to Goodness, that there is nothing in it but what is *possible*, and that the greatest Difficulties that attend it are such as may be *conquered* by Diligence and sincere Endeavour. And as it gives us the most *sensible* Direction and Encouragement to Virtue, so it also represents it to us to the greatest *Advantage*. And whereas Precepts and Discourses of Virtue are only the *Pictures* and *artificial* Descriptions of it, a virtuous Example is Virtue *animated* and exposed to our view in all its *living* Charms and Attractions. And therefore by how much Nature *exceeds* Art, and the most accomplished Beauties *excel* their Statues and Pictures, by so much is Virtue in Examples more *amiable* and *attractive* than in Precepts and Discourses,

courses. Since therefore in good Examples we see Virtue *alive* and *in Motion*, exerting itself in the most *comely* Actions and *graceful* Gestures, this must much more effectually *recommend* and *endear* it to our Minds and Affections than the most *pressing* Discourses or *lively* Descriptions of it.

This therefore is one of those great Means of holy living which the Gospel hath prescribed us, *viz.* that we should propose to ourselves the best and most excellent Examples; that *we should be Followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises*, Heb. vi. 12. and that we should be *Followers* of the Apostles and Leaders of the Flock of Christ, as *they were of Christ himself*, 1 Cor. xi. 1. But because the Examples of the *best* of Men have a great many Imperfections in them, and are very often intermixt either with *Excesses of Defects*, and tainted with *Superstition* or *Enthusiasm*, by reason whereof they frequently mislead those that tread too close upon the Heels of them; therefore we are more particularly directed to the Example of the great Master of our Religion; which though it consists of an *unspotted* Innocence and *perfect* Virtue, yet is every way *accomodated* to the State and Condition of human Nature and Conversation. For he conversed among Men with a *modest* Virtue, and such as was every way consistent with an *ordinary* Course of Life. His Piety was *even*, and *constant*, and *unblameable*, but such as fairly *complied* with *civil* Society and a *secular* Conversation. It affected not high *Transports*, and *Raptures* of Devotion, but was such as was both *fit* and *easy* for Mortals.

to imitate. His Virtue consisted not in *prodigious* Fastings, or *four* and *impracticable* Abstractions from Sense, but in a Life of *Justice* and *Temperance*, of *Humility* and *Charity* and *Patience*, and the like; that is, in such a Life as is not only *proper*, but *possible* for us to transcribe. So that in his glorious Example he hath transmitted to us an *imitable* Virtue; for he took care not to *out-run* the Capacities of Men in imitable Expressions of Sanctity and Virtue, but so far as he could *innocently*, *complied* with our Weakness, and *kept pace* with our Strength; that so he might entertain us all along with the Comforts of his *Company*, and the Influence of a perpetual *Guide*. And as that Rule of Faith which he hath propounded to us, is fitted to our Understanding, being very *short*, *easy*, and *intelligible*; so, as an excellent Writer of our own hath observed, that Copy of Manners which he hath set before us, is not only fitted with Excellencies *worthy*, but also with Compliances *possible* to be imitated by us.

And as his Example is all *imitable*, so it is all throughout *substantially* good. For it consisted in a *modest* Piety, a *simple* and *unaffected* Goodness. His Devotions to God never affected the *Stage*, nor did they ever evaporate in *enthusiastick* Rants, or *unaccountable* Raptures of Passion, but were always *secret* and *serious*, *calm* and *manly*, animated with a *seraphick* Fervour, and yet conducted with *Reason* and *Sobriety*. His Government of himself was *sexact* and *regular*, his Affections were always fixt to their proper *Objects*, and never exceeded the just *Limits* of Reason; and his *Appetites* were always moderated by his *Understanding*,
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and never transgressed the Bounds of *Temperance* and *Nature*. His Conversation among Men was most *innocent* and *candid*, *free* and *ingenuous*; neither *vain* nor *morose*, *haughty* nor *sordid*, but equally poised between all Extremes. He was *just* without Partiality, *humble* without Affectation, *charitable* and *beneficent* without Noise or Respect of Persons. His Zeal was *wise*, *temperate*, and *substantial*; such as did not spend itself in a furious *Contention* for, or *Opposition* to things of an indifferent Nature, but it quietly submitted to the Customs of his Country and of the Church in which he was born and educated; and all his Invectives were against *Hypocrisy* and *Immorality*, which were the only things to which his noble and generous Temper could never be reconciled. In a word, his whole Religion was *modest* and *serious*, and affected rather to be *seen* than to be *heard* and to *be* than to be *seen*. His Heavenly-mindedness was such as rendered him neither too *sour*, nor too *talkative*; and his Patience was always equally distant from *Stupidity* and *Effeminacy*. For so when he endured that miserable Death of the Cross, he suffered like a Man that was *sensible* of Pain, and yet very well knew how to *undergo* it as *became* him, For as on the one hand he did not breath out his Soul like an *effeminate* Epicure, in *whining* Complaints and *wretched* Lamentations; so neither on the other hand did he give up the Ghost like a *flaming* Stoick in a *buffing* Contempt of Death, or an *affected* Insensibility of Pain and Misery. But from the beginning to the end he acted his Part in that bloody Tragedy, as one that was neither *insensible* of Torment, nor

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conquered by it. For the last Words which he breathed, which were a hearty Prayer for his Murderers, manifested his Soul to be *calm* and *serene* under all the Agonies of his Body. Thus is his great Example intirely composed of those excellent Virtues, that are the proper Graces and Ornaments of human Nature. Now though there be some Actions of our Saviour's Life which were never intended for our *Imitation*, viz, such wherein he either *exercised*, or *proved* and *asserted* his divine Authority; yet whatsoever he did of precise *Morality*, and in pursuance to his own *Laws*, he *designed* and *intended* for our Imitation. So that in all such matters, as his *Law* is to be our *Map* and *Rule*, so his *Practice* is to be our *Guide* and *President*.

For this is the great End of our Religion, to which God hath *predestinated* us, namely, to be *conformable to the Image of his Son*, Rom. viii. 29. and in this consists our *putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ*, namely in *imitating* his Manner, and *following* the Garb and Fashion of his Conversation; and accordingly our Saviour tells his Disciples, *John* xiii. 15. *I have given you an Example* (that is of Humility and Charity) *that you should do as I have done to you*; and it is one of his great Commands that we should *learn of him who was meek and lowly of Heart*, with a Promise that in so doing *we should find rest unto our Souls*, Matt. xi. 29.

Wherefore if we would lead a holy Life, pursuant to our holy Resolution, we must set holy Examples before our Eyes, and especially that most holy one of our blessed Saviour. We must *peruse* the History of his sacred Life, and diligently
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observe his Carriage and Demeanour in all those Capacities and Circumstances wherein he was placed, and closely *apply* it to all ourselves as a perfect Pattern of Action. *Thus* and *thus* did my Saviour, *Sic ille manus, sic ora*—so he demeaned himself when he was in my Circumstances, after *this manner* he acted, and thus he suffered; and can I follow a more *glorious* Example; nay, would it not be a burning Shame for me *not* to *imitate* his *Manners* whilst I profess myself his *Disciple*? Think, O my Soul, what would he have now done, if he were in *thy* Condition, and had thy Temptations before him. Would he have *pawned* his Innocence for such a *Trifle*, or *prostituted* himself to such a *base, infamous* Action, to avoid such an *inconsiderable* Inconvenience? No doubtless he *would not*; and art thou not ashamed to *comply* with such a Temptation, knowing with what Indignation thy Saviour would have *rejected* it? If we would but thus inure ourselves to *reflect* upon our Saviour's Example, and *apply* it to, and *compare* it with our own Actions, we cannot imagine with what a divine *Emulation* it would inspire us; how it would *animate* our Weaknesses, and *shame* our Irregularities, and *enamour* our Souls with true Virtue and Goodness.

III. To the *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare it is also necessary that we should frequently apply ourselves for *Advice* and *Direction* to our *spiritual Guides*. For it is to be considered, that Men of a *secular* Life and Conversation, are generally so engaged in the Business and Affairs of this World, that they very rarely acquire Skill enough in Religion to conduct themselves safely

to Heaven through all those Difficulties and Temptations that lie in the way. For before they can be capable to guide themselves safely, they must in all Points of great Moment be able to distinguish between *Truth* and *Falshood*, and to make a difference between *Good* and *Evil*, which in many Instances do border so *near upon* one another, that it requires much greater Skill and Knowledge than the Generality of Men are Masters of to discern the *Point* and *Boundary* that parts them. And supposing their *Understandings* to be so well instructed as to be able to resolve them truly in all those doubtful Cases wherein they are or may be concerned, yet still there is generally such a Fault in their *Wills* as renders them incompetent Judges for themselves; and that is, that through an Excess of *Self-love* they are prone to be *partial* in their own Concerns; and consequently, unless the Case be very *plain* to vote that *true* that is most for their Interest, and *determine* on that side they are most inclined to. For when a Man's Judgment is before in *Suspence*, a very *small* Weight of Interest on the *wrong* side of the Question, usually turns the Scale against the *greater* Probability on the *right*. And whilst Interest *fees* Mens Affections, and their Affections *bribe* their Judgments, it will be almost impossible for them to secure their Innocence whilst they determine all Cases of Right and Wrong at the Tribunal of their own Reason. For when once they have determined *falsely* (as *many times* to be sure they will) besides the many single Miscarriages in *Practice* that will be consequent thereunto; by practising on upon their *false* Determinations, they

they will intangle themselves in such evil *Customs* and *Habits*, as by that time they have *discovered* the Error of their *Judgment* will render it very difficult for them to *correct* the Error of their *Practice*. And therefore to secure ourselves in our Innocence and Duty it is mighty necessary that in all doubtful Cases we should appeal from *ourselves* to the Judgment of *others*, who having no Interest to *bias* them one way or the other, will be much more *impartial*, and therefore (if they have but *equal* Understanding) more *competent* Judges of our Case than ourselves.

Upon both which Accounts the Christian Religion hath wisely *separated* an Order of Men from the World to be the *Guides* and *Conductors* of Souls, to *oversee* and *direct* the secular Flock, who upon the above-mentioned Accounts cannot be supposed to be in *all* Cases competent Guides for themselves. For it was to this purpose that our Saviour before his Ascension commissioned his Disciples *Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. 20. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.* And that he did not intend this merely for a *temporary* Commission which was to *expire* with the first *Bishops* and *Propagators* of the Gospel, but designed to have it *derived* from their Hands to all the *succeeding* Ages of Christianity, is evident not only from the Promise annexed to it, that *he would be with them to the End of the World*, which plainly shews that it was to continue in Force

till *then* ; but also from hence, that they to whom this Commission was *immediately* given, did *actually* derive it to others, 2 *Tim.* i. 6. with a strict Charge that *these* also should *successively* derive it to others, *Tit.* i. 5,

And as by this *perpetual* Commission Christ hath established a Succession of Men to be the *Guides* of Souls to the End of the World, so he hath obliged all Christian People to *attend to* and *respect* them as such. For *he that beareth you, saith he, beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me,* Luke x. 16. and 1 *Cor* iv. 1. the Apostle enjoins all Christians *to account of these spiritual Guides as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; so also 1 *Thes.* v. 12. 13. he earnestly *beseeches them*, as a matter of vast Importance, *that they would know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and were to admonish them and esteem them very highly in love for their Works sake*; and *Heb.* xiii. 17. he gives this Injunction, *Obeys them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

There being therefore an Order of Men that are thus *sanctified* and *set apart* from the World, by the Commission of our Saviour, to *consult* the various Necessities of Souls, and *administer* to them in all their religious Concerns; it would doubtless mightily contribute to their successful *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, if in all their *streights* and *difficulties* Men would *apply themselves*
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to them for Counsel and Direction, with such Modesty and Sincerity as they ought to do. For besides that they might reasonably expect a greater *Blessing* upon *their* Counsels than *other* Men's, they being *commissioned* Guides under the great Shepherd of Souls, who, we must needs suppose, will more especially *co-operate* with the Means of his own Ordination: besides this, I say, they being Persons that are wholly *devoted* to the Study and Ministries of Religion, must needs be supposed *cæteris paribus*, to have a farther *Insight* into the Cases of Souls, into their *Dangers* and *Refuges*, *Diseases* and *Remedies*, and consequently to be better able to *counsel* and *direct* them than Men of a *secular* Life and Conversation. If therefore Men would be but so kind to themselves, as to apply themselves in all their spiritual Exigencies to a *holy*, *wise*, and *well-instructed* Guide; to *uncover* their Sores, *lay open* their Cases, and *reveal* the Secrets of their Souls to him, so far as is necessary to enable him to make proper Applications; it is not to be expressed what a *vast* Advantage they might make of him. He would be instead of a *good Genius* or *Tutelar Angel* to their Souls, to suggest many a good *Thought* to them, and feed their Meditations with many an useful *Notion*; to enable them to *extract* from the Articles of their Belief their just and proper Inferences, and reduce them to practical Principles, to *rectify* their Wandrings, and *extricate* them from their Doubts; to *comfort* them in their Sorrows, and *quicken* them in their Indispositions; to *warm* their Indifferences, and *moderate* their Zeal, so as that they may neither be *becalmed*

by the one, nor *overborn* by the too violent Gusts of the other; and in a word, to *direct* them to the proper Methods of *mortifying* their bad Inclinations, and *conducting* their Religion so, as to render it more *easy* and *delightful* to them. These and a great many other good Offices a *wise* and *well-experienced* Guide would be able to do Men, if they would but take him along with them in their *Journey* to Heaven, and *modestly* submit themselves to his Conduct and Direction. And in thus doing, they would act not only with greater *Security* to their Innocence, but with greater *Satisfaction* to their Consciences: because then their Actions would be warranted, not only by their own *private* Sentiments, which in many Cases they will have just cause to suspect, but also by the *better* and more *impartial* Judgment of an *authorized* Guide. For if under *his* Conduct they should happen in any doubtful Instance to *err* from the way of Truth or Righteousness, they will have this Satisfaction, that they have used the *best* Means to *prevent* it, the Means to which God himself hath *remitted* them, to whom alone they are accountable for their Actions, and who, as they may well imagine, will very much *compassionate* such Miscarriages as may follow upon their Submission to his own Appointments. But if notwithstanding the great Care that he hath taken of their Souls, in appointing them *Pilots* to steer them safely to Heaven, they will *embark* without them, and presume so far upon their own Skill as to venture to their eternal *Port* through all those *Rocks* and *Quicksands* that lie in their way; they must needs be in great Danger of miscarrying,

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which if they do, they may thank *themselves* for it, and can expect no *Pity* from God, whose careful Provision for their eternal Safety they have so ungratefully *contemned* and *neglected*.

IV. To our prosperous *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare it is also necessary that, as often as we can, we should actually *intend* and *aim* at God in the Course of our Lives and Actions. For it is of mighty Advantage to the Conduct of a Man's Life to have his *Intentions* united, and continually to act with one steady *Drift* and *Aim*. Because while he intends but *one* thing, he unites the whole *Vigour* of his Nature in the pursuit of it, and is continually driving at it with all the *Force* and *Activity* of his Faculties. It is an *Italian* Proverb, *From the Man of one Business, good Lord deliver me*; because minding *that* only, he must needs be supposed to be the more *expert* and *sagacious* in it, and consequently the more able to *exceed* and *over-reach* another Man who hath only minded it by the *by*; but when a Man acts with a multifarious Intention, he must needs be *distracted* in his Operations, and the Force of his Faculties being *divided* by the multiplicity of his Aims, must needs be so *weakened* that it will be impossible for him to pursue any one of them with *Vigour* and *Activity*. It is one of *Pythagoras* his Maxims, *Δεῖ καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἓνα γίνεσθαι*, *a Man ought to be one*, i. e. so far as he is able, to fix all his Aims upon one *End*, and unite them in one *Center*, and not to suffer himself to be tossed hither and thither by *independent* Designs and Intentions; because this will unavoidably *distract* him in his Prosecutions, and so *divide* and *weaken* his Principles of

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Action,

Action, that he will be able to do nothing to any Purpose. God therefore being the great Object of Religion, it is necessary, in order to our Progress therein, that we should, as much as in us lies, *respect* and *aim* at him in the whole Course of our Actions; that we should continually *look up* to him as to the directing Star by which we are to *steer* our Motions, and *conduct* our whole Lives under a fixt Intention to *obey* his Will, and *imitate* his Nature.

And indeed unless we do this, we are not good Men in the Sense and Judgment of Religion. For Religion, as such, is a Rule of divine *Worship*; and under this Notion the Christian Religion in particular enjoins all its Duties, *viz.* of *Homage* and *Worship*, to God. For it requires us to *do all as unto God*, Col. iii. 23. and *to do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. that is to do all in *Obedience* to him, and *Imitation* of him, from a sincere Acknowledgment of the Perfections of his Nature, of his sovereign Authority over us, and immutable Right to rule and command us. Not that an *actual, explicit* Intention of *obeying* or *imitating* God is necessary to every good Action; for our occasions of doing good, being so *infinite*, and so *often* occurring in our secular Affairs, and our Minds being so incapable as they are, of attending *many things at once*; it is impossible for us actually to intend Obedience to God in *every* good thing we perform; but that in the *general* we should heartily intend it is indispensably necessary to the consecrating our best Actions, and adopting them into the Family of Religion. For that we must obey God, is the fundamental Law of Religion,

Religion, from whence all the particular Commands and Prohibitions of it do receive their Force and Obligation. So that unless we do what he commands with a *general Intention* of Mind to obey him, we do not act upon a religious Obligation; and consequently though our Actions should be *materially* good, yet are they not *formally* religious,

Now to the fixing and settling such a *general Intention* in our Minds, it is necessary that in the particular Exercise of our Religion we should, so far as we are able, *actually intend* and *aim* at God; that we should throw by all other Ends, so far as we are able, and refer our Actions *directly* and *immediately* to him; in a word, that we should *formally* devote and *dedicate* them to his blessed Will and Pleasure, so as to be able to say, *this* and *this* I do *purely* to please God, with a *single Intention* of Soul to *resemble* and please him, to transcribe his Nature, and comply with his Will. For which End we must take care, as oft as we can, to perform our religious Actions in such a manner, as that no *secular* Ends may interpose between God and our Intentions; to be as *private* and as *modest* as we can in our Religion, and not expose it any more than needs must to the Eye of the World, lest *Applause* and *Reputation* should intrude themselves upon us, and carry away our *Intention* from God. For thus our Saviour advises in the case of Charity and Prayer, *Matt. vi. 1, 7.* that *we should not do our Alms before Men, to be seen of them, nor sound a Trumpet before them, to make the Streets ring of our Charity; nay, if possible, that we should not let our left Hand know what our*
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right Hand doth; but that our Alms should be *secret*, and known only to God and ourselves; and that when we *pray*, we should not affect to make a pompous shew of it, *in the Synagogues and Corners of the Streets*, but *that we should enter into our Closets and shut our Door*, and in the most *private* Manner unbosom our Souls to God; the Sense of all which is, that we should endeavour, as far in us lies, so to *circumstantiate* our Charity and Devotion, as not to give any Opportunity to secular Ends and Aims, to obtrude themselves upon us, to *minge* with our pious *Intentions*, and *deflower* the Purity of them.

Not that I think it *unlawful* for a Man to intend any thing but God in the discharge of his Duty, or that our Intention is *bad* when it immediately respects any *worldly* End, such as Pleasure, or Profit, or Honour, which are proposed by God himself as Arguments to persuade Men to their Duty; and what Hurt can it be for Men to *aim* at that in the discharge of their Duty, which God hath proposed to them as an *Encouragement* to it? It is true if worldly Advantage be the *only* or *chief* End we aim at, our *Intention* is naught, and so are all the *Actions* thence proceeding; but if together with what we do so heartily *intend* and *aim* to please God and conform ourselves to his blessed Will and Nature, as to continue on in the Path of our Duty to him, not only when we have no prospect of outward Advantage to induce us to it, but when outward Evils and Inconveniences lie in our way, we need not doubt but our Intention is truly *good* and *sincere*, notwithstanding those immediate Respects which it many times hath to
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secular Ends and Inducements. But yet it is certain that the *more* it respects these, the more *imperfect* it is, and the more liable to be vanquished by outward Temptations. For it is a plain sign that it is conscious of its own Weakness, when it dares not stand alone, but is fain to call in to it the Assistance of these worldly Ends to support and defend it; and the less of worldly Aim there is in our religious Intention, to be sure the more *pure* and *simple* it is, and the more of *substantial* Piety there is in it; and though it may be truly sincere notwithstanding its being *compounded* with secular Aims and Respects, yet the more of these there is in it, the *weaker* and more *unstable* it must necessarily be. For, our Mind being *finite*, cannot possibly intend *many* things with *equal* Strength and Vigour, as it can do *one*; and when its Intention is *dispersed* among various Objects, it must necessarily be more *languid* than when it is *collected*, *united*, and *fixt* upon one; and consequently the *more* a Man's Intention respects the World, the *less* in proportion it must respect God, and so on the contrary. And then the less a Man respects *God* in his Duty, and the more he respects the *World*, the more liable he will be to the Temptations of worldly Loss or Advantage. For when those Advantages which he so much respects, lie on the *opposite* side to his Duty, to be sure he will be so much the more *inclined* to desert it; and as often as Fortune shifts sides, and carries with it the Advantages of Pleasure, Profit, or Honour, from *Virtue* to *Vice*, or from *Vice* to *Virtue*, he will still be ready to *face about* with it, and be always *veering* like a Weathercock to a contrary Point

Point upon every Change of Wind. Whereas when a Man's Intention *purely* respects God, it will be *immovably* fixt among all the Charges and Alterations from without, For there is no outward Change or *Capricio* of Fortune can hinder a Man from pleasing God, whose Love to us depends not upon our being *poor* or *rich*, *pleased* or *pained*, *depressed* or *advanced*, but upon our being truly *virtuous* and *religious*. And therefore if our Aim be *purely* to please him, we shall be sure to continue so, which side soever Fortune smiles upon.

Wherefore to our successful Progress in Religion it is highly necessary that, so far as in us lies, we should *abstract* and *separate* our religious Intentions from all these *worldly* respects; and this must be done by looking frequently up to God, and actually *referring* and *dedicating* our Actions to him; by shutting our Eyes, when we are entring upon any Duty, to all worldly Considerations; and determining with ourselves, *this* I will do purely because it is *Godlike*, or because God hath *commanded* it; whether I shall be *commended* or *disgraced* for it, whether I shall *get* or *lose* by it, I will not now regard, it is sufficient that it is *good*, and that God hath commanded it, and therefore for this Reason *only* I will do it, without any *other* Respect or Consideration. By which Means we shall by degrees so *purify* our Intentions, and *refine* them from worldly Aims, that we shall be able to act *vigorously* in Religion without any other Respect but that of *pleasing* God, and *conforming* ourselves to his Will and Nature. And when once we can do thus, we are in a great forward-

forwardness in Religion. For now the Will of God hath got such an Ascendant over *ours*, that as we can chearfully obey him without *external* Inducements, so we can freely condemn all Inducements *to the contrary*; and it being our *great* and *chief* aim to *please* and be *like* him, the things that are *without* us will have very little Power to move us one way or the other. Because now our great Aim is *above* them, and our Eyes are so stedfastly *fixt* upon God, that we are not at Leisure to regard them. And our Mind being thus *indisposed* to listen to the restless Importunities of *external* Goods and Evils, our Innocence is safe, and we may pass triumphantly through all their Temptations. It is a noble Saying of *Epicetus*, lib. 2. c. 19. ἐκ ἑσιν ἄλλως ἐκβαλεῖν λύπην, φόβον, ἐπιθυμίαν, &c. εἰμὴ πρὸς μόνον τὸν θεὸν ἀποβλέποντα, ἐκείνῳ μόνῳ προσπεπονθότα, τοῖς ἐκείνῃς προσάγμασι καθωσιωμένον, *i. e.* “ There is no other way for a Man to
 “ eject sorrow, and fear, and lust from his Soul, but
 “ by looking up to God alone, and resigning our-
 “ selves to him only, and devoting our Lives to the
 “ Obedience of his Commandments.” And else-
 where he tells his Scholars, that the main thing which he drove at was, Ἀποτελέσαι ὑμᾶς ἐλευθέρους, εὐ-
 δαιμονεῖν, εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἀφορῶντας, ἐν παιτὶ μικρῷ καὶ μεγάλῳ, *i. e.* ” To make them free and blessed by per-
 “ suading them to look up to God in every thing,
 “ whether it be small or great, lib. 2. c. 19.” For whilst in our religious Intentions we do *too much* respect the things that are without us, we do in a great Measure *intrust* them with our Virtue and Religion; and so far as we make them Inducements to our Duties, so far it is in their Power
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to *secure* or *betray* it. As for Instance, so much as I aim at *Profit* in any *religious* Action, so much *Power* Profit hath over my Religion; and if the same Profit should invite me to a *wicked* Action, it will have as much Power to *betray* my Religion, as it had to *secure* it; for the same Gain will have the same Influence on me when it tempts me to *sin*, as it hath when it tempts me to *obey*. What a dangerous thing therefore is it for Men to intrust such a Treasure as their Innocence and Religion in such *irresponsible* Hands, and to give those outward things which are the Temptations of *Vice*, a Power to dispose of their *Virtue*? What is this but to commit the keeping of our *Sheep* to a *Wolf*, or of our *Chastity* to a *Goat*? Wherefore as we would be safe in our religious *Progress*, it highly concerns us to *purify* our good Intentions, so far as we are able, from all *worldly* Respects, and to level them *directly* and *immediately* at God. And in order hereunto,

V. To render the *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare successful, it is also necessary that we possess our Minds with an awful Apprehension of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us. Among the many excellent Rules, which the Heathen Moralists have given for the Conduct of Men's Lives, this is one, that in the whole Course of their Lives they should imagine some *excellent Person*, for whom they have a great *Veneration*, to be *present* with them, as a *Witness* and *Spectator* of all their Actions. And it was wholesom Advice that one gave his *lewd* Friend, that he should hang the Picture of his *grave* and *serious* Father in the Room where he was wont to celebrate
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his *Debauches*; imagining that the *severe* Eye of the good old Man, though but in *Effigy*, would give a Check to the *wanton* Sallies of the intemperate Youth. And if the bare *Fiction* of a Man's being present with us, or his being present only in a *dead* Picture, may be rationally supposed to have so strong an Influence on our Actions; of how much greater Force must our firm *Belief* and *Sense* of God's Presence with us be to regulate our Lives and Actions? And that he is thus *present* with us we have sufficient Reason to conclude, not only from the infinite *Plenitude* of his Essence, which being *Self-existent* could not be *bounded* or *limited* by any Cause from without, and therefore must necessarily be *boundless* and *immense*; but also from express Assertions of Scripture, which assure us *that his Eyes are in every Place beholding the Evil and the Good*, Prov. xv. 3. *That he is a God at hand, and not a God afar off*; and *that no Man can hide himself in secret Places that he shall not see him*; and *that he fills Heaven and Earth*, Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. and *that we can go no whither from his Presence*, Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8. and *that all things are naked and open to his Eyes*, Heb. iv. 13. that is, that the World is *surrounded* and *filled* with his Being, which is both the *Womb* that *contains*, and the *Soul* that *pervades* the Creation, and that being thus *present* with us where-ever we are, he must needs be supposed to have a constant *Inspection* over us, and a clear *Sense* and *Perception* of whatsoever we do.

And he being thus present with us in *Reality*, and not in *Fiction* or *Picture*, it must doubtless be of mighty avail to the Well-government of our
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Lives; to be continually inspired with an *actual* and *vigorous* Sense of it. And therefore our Saviour commands us to do good from a lively Sense that God's Eye is upon us. *Mat. vi. 4, 6. That our Father who sees us in secret shall reward us openly.* And this I conceive to be the meaning of that comprehensive Precept which God gave to *Abraham, Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, *Gen. xvii. 1. i. e.* be have thyself as one that art sensible thou art always in my Presence, and under my Eye, and in the Sense of this, see thou beest *upright* and *sincere*, and that thou dost not vainly attempt to impose upon me by any demure *Shews* or hypocritical *Pretences*. And the same is implied in that of the Apostle, *Col. iii. 22. Servants obey in all things your Masters according to the Flesh, not with Eye service, as Men pleasers, but in singleness of Heart, fearing God, i. e.* be not like those Servants that do their Duty for no other End but to ingratiate themselves with their Masters, and accordingly do it no longer than while their Master's Eye is upon them; but do you it with all *Sincerity*, out of an awful respect to God, considering that when Man's Eye is *off*, his Eye is *upon* you. The Sense of all which is, that after the Example of holy *David*, *Psal. xvi. 8*, we should endeavour to *set the Lord always before us*, and to possess our Minds with a quick and lively Sense of his being continually *present* with us, wheresoever we are, and whatsoever we are about, and a constant *Witness* and *Spectator* of all our Actions.

And this we shall find will be of unspeakable Use to us in the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare. For,

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1. It will mightily restrain us from all sinful Actions. For St. *Austin* observes, the greatest part of Sin is taken away if a Man hath but a *Witness* of his Conversation, and much more if he be sensible that he hath such a Witness as God, with whom he is infinitely more concerned than with all the World besides ; who is the *Judge* of all his Actions, the *Rewarder* of Virtue, and *Punisher* of Vice, the eternal Source of all those *Evils* or *Goods* that he can *fear* or *hope for*. And who but a Man that is desperately wicked. dares do an evil Action in the *Presence* and *Sight* of such a formidable Witness ? For suppose you beheld this Almighty Being sitting upon a Cloud in some visible Form, with a Thunder-bolt in his hand ; and from thence looking down upon you, *curiously* observing how you demean yourselves, and *closely* pursuing you with his awful Eye through all your dark *Retreats* and *Privacies* ; would not the thought of any Action that is displeasing to him be ready to strike you into *Tremble* and *Horror* ? Could you imagine yourselves to be any where secure in your Wickedness while you saw yourselves uncovered to his All-seeing Eyes, to which your Closets lie as open as your Halls, and your Hearts as the Highways ? Doubtless you could not. Why now the lively *Belief* and *Apprehension* of a thing is equivalent to a *sensible* Perception. If I were *thoroughly assured* that the King were listening behind the Curtain, and heard every Word that is spoken in the Room, I should doubtless be as much afraid of talking Treason against him, though I saw him *not*, as if he stood just *before* me. And so though God be with me in an

invisible manner, and I am not able to see him through that thick Curtain of Matter, which is drawn between me and his spiritual Essence, yet if I *firmly believe* that he is *behind* it, and am constantly aware that he is *listening* to what I *say*, and *prying* into what I *do*, that he keeps *Intelligence* with my *Thoughts*, and is intimately *acquainted* with all my *Designs* and *Intentions*, it will render me as cautious of my *Thoughts*, and *Words*, and *Actions*, as if I saw him standing by me in a *visible Shechinah* or *Glory*, to *record* every *Passage* of my *Life*, and *enter* into his *Debt Books* every *Item* of my *Guilt* against the great *Day* of *Accounts*. But how much the want of such a due *Apprehension* of God's *Presence* with us, lets Men loose to all *Wickedness*, may be collected from that of the Prophet, *Ezek. ix. 9. The Iniquity of the house of Judah is exceeding great, and the Land is full of blood, and the City full of perversenejs*, and how comes this to pass? Why, *they say, the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not*; whereas on the contrary, *David* attributes his *keeping God's Precepts and Testimonies*, to the lively *Sense* he had that his ways were always *before God*, *i. e.* lay open to his *Sight* and *Inspection*, *Psal. cxix. 168.* But then,

2. Such a lively *Sense* of God's *Presence* with, and *Inspection* over us, will be of mighty *Use* to keep us *sincere* and *upright* in the whole *Course* of our *Actions*. For alas! to what purpose should we *dissemble* and *conceal* our *Wickedness* from the *Eye* of the *World*, so long as we *lie open* to the *Eye* of *God*? Would you not think it very strange to see a *Company* of *Prisoners*, that within a few

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Hours are to be tried for their Lives, solicitously concerning themselves how to appear lovely and innocent *to one another*, hiding their Deformities and disguising their Crimes with *artificial* Pretexts and Apologies, that so they might cheat and *juggle* one another into a mutual good Opinion of themselves ; but in the mean time take no notice of their *Judge*, who sits before them upon the Bench, observing all their *Tricks* and *Impostures*, and holds their Lives in his Hands, being commissioned to *discharge* or *condemn* them according as he finds them *Innocent* or *Guilty*? And yet just thus do those men act whose Religion is nothing but a vain Ostentation and Ambition of popular Applause ; they *skrew* their Looks, *study* their Actions, *force* their Inclinations, and all to compose themselves into an outward *Semblance* of Religion ; they employ a world of Care and Art to *disguise* themselves, and with the Colours of Sanctity to *varnish* their unhallowed Natures ; they openly *deny* themselves their dearest Pleasures, and in the view of the World are many times forced to act against the *Grain* of their strongest Inclinations ; and all this to *mask* their depraved Tempers, that they may *appear* what they *are not*, in the view of the World, and juggle themselves into a *Saint-like* Reputation : but whilst they are thus industriously *courting* the good Opinion of their Fellow-prisoners, their All-seeing *Judge*, upon whose final Sentence their everlasting Fate depends, is *present* with them ; and, though they take no more notice of him than if he were a *Cypher* in the World, is perfectly *conscious* to all their Artifice, and *sees through* all their hypocritical Disguises,

and will ere long *unmask* and expose them to the View and Scorn of all the World. And this considered, what a ridiculous Folly is *Hypocrisy*, that *hides* us only from those that have *little* or *nothing* to do with us, but leaves us *bare* and *naked* to his Eye with whom we are most *concerned*? Alas! what a poor project is it to take so much Pains, as we do, to recommend ourselves to Men, to Men that must stand at the *same* Tribunal, and undergo the *same* Judgment with ourselves? For what will their *good* Opinion avail us, if the Judge *disapprove* us, in whose hands our Lives and Souls are? If he think *well* of us, we are safe, though all the World should condemn us, if he condemn us, though every Creature should *acquitt*, they cannot *rescue* us from his Sentence. But alas! how *differently* soever God and Men may think of us *now*, yet when he comes to discover his Thoughts of us, in his publick Judgment and Sentence, all the World will be of *his* Mind; and if we *stand right* in his Opinion, we shall be *applauded* by the whole Universe, howsoever we may be vilified now; as on the contrary, if he *condemn* us, we shall be sure to be *hissed* at throughout all the Congregation of Spirits, how *gloriously* soever we may be thought of at present. And by how much the better we are esteemed of *now*, by so much the more we shall be *hissed* at *then*, when the *Cheer* is discovered, and the hypocritical Vizard is plucked from our Devils Faces.

This if Men duly considered, and fixed it in their Minds, would effectually cure them of all their *Hypocrisy*. For alas! what Hypocrisy can so *cunningly* disguise them, as to conceal them from
 Omnisci-

Omniscience? If Men will be wicked therefore, they were e'en as good put on a *bold Face*, and be wicked *openly*; for it is to very little purpose for them to *sneak* into Corners, unless they could find one *dark* enough to *conceal* them from God, and *cover* them from his All-seeing Eye. For why should that Man be *ashamed* or *afraid* to let a Boy or Neighbour be *conscious* to his Wickedness, that never scruples to commit it in the open *View* of the dreadful Majesty of Heaven, by whose final Sentence his everlasting Fate must be decided?

And so on the other hand, to what purpose should we study to be more *devout* and *temperate*, *sober*, and *charitable* in the view of the World, than we are in our Retirements, when we have no other Eye but God's upon us? That which we are mainly concerned in, is to prove ourselves to *him*, and if we can do this, what great matter is it though our *Closet* be all our *Stage*, and *Heaven* our only *Spectator*? God *bears* the softest Whispers of our Souls, and *sees* through all our honest Intentions, and our most *secret* Virtues are as *legible* to his Eye as if they were written on our Foreheads with a Sun-beam. We need no Trumpet to proclaim our Alms in his *Ears*, for he knows by whom such poor a Man was *relieved*, such a starving Family *succoured*, though we should not superscribe our *Names* upon our Charity, nor *let our left hand know what our right hand hath done*. And if by the *sincere* Discharge of our Duty we have *approved* ourselves to God, what need we concern ourselves any farther; since it is not from *Men*, but from *God*, that we expect the *Recompence*

of our Obedience. No doubtless, did we but live under the constant sense of God's *Presence* with and *Inspection* over us, we should regard him *much more* in every good Action; and the good Opinion of the World *much less* than we do; and the more *secret* our good Deeds were, the more we should *rejoice* in them, because they would give us a *stronger* Testimony of our *Simplicity* and *Sincerity*. For what should move us to be good when God only sees us, but *pure* respect to his Authority, and an *honest* Intention of obeying him? and if *Obedience* be our Design, the more *private* our good Deeds are, the more *Pleasure* they will afford us, because those good Deeds have *most* of Obedience in them, that have *least* of the Theatre.

IV. To prosper our *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary, that we should frequently *examine* and *review* our own Actions. For this our Religion enjoins as a necessary Part of the *militant* Life of a Christian. So 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves whether you be in the Faith, prove your own selves*; and particularly, it is enjoined as a proper Preparation to the Sacrament. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. So also Gal, vi. 4. *Let a Man prove, or examine, his own Work*, where the Greek word δοκιμάζειν, which in all these Texts we render to *prove* or *examine*, hath two Significations, First, to call ourselves to *Account*, to *try* our *past* Actions by the Rule, whether they be good or evil; Secondly, to take such a due *Care* of our Actions as that upon a strict Trial of them we may be able to *approve* them to God and our own Consciences.

In

In the *first* of which Senses the New Testament doth most commonly understand it, namely, to call ourselves to *Account*, and make a strict *Survey* of our Actions, and pass an impartial *Judgment* upon them, whether they are good or evil; and accordingly 1 Cor. xi. 31. indeed of δοκιμάζεται in Verse 28. i. e. *Let a Man examine himself*, the Apostle uses a synonymous Phrase, διακρίνωμεν, i. e. if we *judge ourselves*, if we *summon* our past Actions before the *Tribunal* of our Consciences, and *try* and *examine* them by the Rule whether they are good or evil, and according as we find them, to *approve* or *condemn* ourselves for them.

And this is a Duty of great Necessity to the successful Prosecution of our Christian Warfare. For unless we do frequently *reflect* upon ourselves, and take a *strict* account of our past Actions and Behaviour, we shall incur a thousand Errors and Immoralities in the Hurry of our secular Occasions, without taking any *notice* of them; and those Sins which we *heedlessly* commit, and never *think of* afterwards, though at first perhaps they may have little or no *Malice* in them, do yet leave a *malicious* Infusion behind them, and *infect* the Will with bad Inclinations, and insensibly *dispose* it to *wilful* and *deliberate* Sins. For the Pleasure of one bad Action will be still inviting us to *another*, and that to a *third*, and so shall be inconsiderately *rolled* on from Sin to Sin in the course of a *heedless* and *unreflecting* Life, till, before ever we are aware, our Inclination to the Sin which we have so *heedlessly repeated*, becomes too strong for our pious *Resolution*. For when we have *carelessly* permitted

one Sin to break through our Fence. that will open a gap for *another*, to follow, and if this be not presently *stopt* by Repentance, it will make the Breach yet *wider* for *others*, and those again for *others*, till at last they have quite *trodden down* our good Resolution, and made a *Thorough-fare* in our Wills for a Custom of sinning. But if we frequently *reflect* upon, and *examine* ourselves, it is impossible our Faults should long escape our *Discovery*, and we shall be sure to *see* them time enough to *correct* and *amend* them before they are too *deeply* rooted in our Natures, and have wound themselves too *far* into our Inclinations; and a Wound in our *Innocence*, as well as our Bodies, may be easily cured, if it be taken *in time*; but if it be *neglected* too long, it will *rankle* by degrees into an incurable Gangreen.

And as frequent *Self-Examination* is a great *Bridle* to our *Sin*, so it is also an effectual *Spur* to our *Virtue*. For as when a Man reflects upon his Sins and Miscarrages, and considers *how* and *where* he hath done amiss, his Conscience will be presently *urging* and *exciting* him to Repentance and Amendment; so when he reflects upon his own Virtue and Sincerity, his Conscience will *smile upon* and *crown* him with Applauses, and give him such a *sweet* and *grateful* Relish of his own Actions, as will mightily *incourage* him to *persevere* in Well doing. For in all our *Self-Examinations*, we taste the difference between *Good* and *Evil*, the *Sweetness* of that, and the *Bitterness* of this, and consequently, the oftner we do so, the more we shall be sure to *like* and *approve* of the one, and to *dislike* and *nauseate* the other.

Where-

Wherefore to secure a good Success to this our Christian Warfare, as it is necessary, especially *at first*, that we should every *Morning*, before we go into the World, repeat and enforce our good *Resolution*; so it is no less requisite, especially till we have made some *considerable* Progress, that we should every *Night*, when we are withdrawn from the World, strictly *examine* the Performances of the Day, whether they are such as do comport with our solemn Engagements. And if upon an impartial Survey it appear that they do, though as yet it be but *weakly* and *imperfectly*, let us *attend* to the Sense of our own Minds, to that silent Melody that resounds from our Consciences to our Actions, and so lie down in Peace, *blessing* and *adoring* that Grace, by which we have been *assisted* and *preserved*. Or if it appear that we have been *unwearily* faulty, for want of due Care and Watchfulness, let us resolve to take more *Care* for the future, and thereby to put a timely *Stop* to our Sin, before it hath too far *insinuated* into our Will and Inclinations; but if we are conscious of any *wilful* Breach upon our Morning Vows of Obedience, let us *lament* and *bewail* it with Shame and Indignation. What have I done, O wretched *Traitor* that I am, to God and my own Soul! I have *falsified* my Vows to Heaven, and *broke* those Sacred Bands by which I was *tied up* from my Lusts, and my Ruin. What can I *plead* for myself, *base* and *unworthy* that I am? With what Face can I go into his dreadful Presence whom I have so often *mocked* with my *treacherous* Promises of Amendment? Yet go I will, though I am all *ashamed* and *confounded*, and *confess* and *bewail* mine Iniquity before him.

If

If we would but take care thus to call ourselves to *Account* every Night, and impartially to *censure* the Actions of the Day, it is not to be imagined how fast it would set us *forward* in our Christian Warfare ; how much the *Reflection* on a *well-spent* Day would *cheer* and *enliven* us ; how the grateful Sense of it would *spirit* our Faculties, and *incourage* us to go on against all Oppositions ; how much the *Review* of the Day would contribute to make our Reason more *vigilant*, and our Consciences more *tender* for the future ; how much the Pleasure of our Sins would be *allayed* and *abated* by the *stinging* Reflections we should make upon them, and how much the dread of having the same Reflections *repeated* to us at Night, would secure us against the *Temptations* of the Day.

VII. To prosper the *Course* of our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should be very *Watchful* and *Circumspect*. For this also is one of those *militant* Duties which the Gospel enjoins us. Thus *Matt. xxvi. 41. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into Temptation* ; and *Mark xiii. 37. What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch* : so also. *1 Cor. xvi. 13. Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit yourselves like Men* ; and *1 Thes. v. 6. Wherefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us Watch and be sober* ; where the Nature of the Duty is plainly discovered by its Opposite or Contrary, *Let us not Sleep, but Watch, i. e.* do not behave yourselves like Men that are *asleep*, that take no Notice or Regard of what is done *by, to, or about them*, ; but be sure you exercise a *faithful, prudent, and constant Care* over your own Actions, and those manifold
Tempta-

Temptations that *assault* and *surround* you. And therefore elsewhere it is exprest by *walking Circumspectly*, Eph. v. 15. *i. e.* looking round about you, *weighing* the Nature and Circumstances of your Actions, and using all honest Care either to *prevent* the Temptations that threaten you, or to *provide* against them; so that in short the sense of this Duty is this, that we carefully avoid acting *rashly* and *precipitantly*, without *considering* beforehand the Nature of our Action, whether it be good or evil; that in all *doubtful* and *suspicious* Cases we impartially *consult* our Rule and Conscience, and *look* before we *leap*, and take Care to *satisfy* ourselves of the Goodness of our *Designs*, before we put them into *Execution*; in a word, that we do not *carelessly* run ourselves into Temptations, but if possible, to *avoid* them, if not, to be sure to *arm* ourselves against them, and keep as *far off* from all Sin, especially from that we are most *inclined* to, as is consistent with our necessary Occasions; or, in fewer Words, it is to be always *well advised* in what we do, whether it be good or evil; and if it be *evil*, to remove so far as we can from all *Occasions* that lead to it, and provide ourselves with Considerations *against* it, and to keep them always *awake* in our Minds, that we may not be *surprized* by it unawares:

Which is a Duty indispensably necessary for us in the whole Course of our Christian Warfare. For whilst we accustom ourselves to act *rashly* and *inconsiderately*, without bethinking beforehand what we say or do, we wander like Blindmen in a Field that is full of *Pits* and *Quagmires*,
and

and are every Moment in danger of stumbling into one Mischief or other, and shall certainly plunge ourselves into many an evil Custom before ever we have bethought ourselves of the Evil of it; and so instead of conquering our *old* Sins, we shall be ever and anon running ourselves into new ones, and while we are running away from *one* Evil, shall many times stumble into *another*, and to avoid the *Defects* of Virtue leap headlong into the *Excesses* of it. For in most moral Actions the Transition from the *utmost* of what is *lawful* into the *nearest* of what is *sinful* is indiscernable; and that Line which parts *this* Virtue from *that* neighbouring Vice, is generally so *small*, that it is hard to distinguish where they are *separated*, and to fix the just *Boundary* whitherto we many go and no farther. But then considering that almost every Virtue lies in the *Middle* between two sinful *Extremes*, neither of which are separated from it by any *plain* or *visible* Land mark: how is it possible for us, without great *Care* of our Steps, to keep on steadfastly in the *right* Path, when there are so many *wrong* ones bordering upon it? For when we perceive we have wandered too far towards *either* Extreme, and are endeavouring to *retrieve* ourselves, if we do not take great Care of our Steps we shall be apt to wander as far the *other* way, and so stumble out of one Extreme into another. For he who lives *heedlessly* and *incuri-ously*, regards not how *near* he approaches to any Sin, provided he doth but keep himself out of it; and when once a Man takes the Liberty to go as near to any Sin as he thinks he lawfully *may*, it is a thousand to one but he will be transported by his

his Inclination a great deal further than he *should*. So true is that of *Clem. Alex. Pædag. lib. 2. c. 1.* Ταχὺ γὰρ καταπιψισιν ἐπὶ τὸ δρᾶν τὸ μὴ ἐξόν, οἱ πάντα δρῶντες ἂ ἐξόν, *i. e.* they who will do all things that are *lawful*; will quickly be induced to do what is *unlawful*; especially if they be strongly inclined to it; because the very *Nearness* of what a Man loves, doth always render it more *tempting* and *alluring* to him. Thus he that hath a strong Inclination to *Lying*, can never be safe so long as he allows himself to be excessive *talkative*; he that is vehemently propense to *fleshy Lust*, must needs indanger his Innocence if he come too near the farthest Limits of a *modest* Freedom; and he whose Nature is prone to *Malice* and *Revenge*, cannot but run a mighty Hazard if he indulge to himself the utmost Degree of a *just* and *lawful* Resentment. For bad *Inclinations*, are never so impatient of Restraint, as when they are within *Prospect* of their proper *Satisfactions*, and the Objects which attract them are *near* and *easy* to be enjoyed. Upon which Account it must needs be a very dangerous Thing for such as are engaged in the Christian Warfare, to live within *Sight* of the Temptations they are most inclined to; because the *nearer* they are to them, the more they will *court* and *importune* them; and while a Man comes near a beloved *Lust* and doth not enjoy it, he doth but *tantalize* himself, and *inrage* his Appetite after those vicious Satisfactions, whose *alluring* Relishes he had almost *forgotten*. If therefore he would obtain a perfect Victory over his Lust, he must not only forbear to *act*, but also to *approach* it; at least, till he hath so far weaned his

Inclination

Inclination from it, as that its *Nearness* ceases to be a *Temptation* to him. For Inclination, like all other Motion, is always *swiftest* when it is *nearest* its Center, and when once it is within the *Reach* and *Attraction* of it, it hurries towards it with *Fury* and *Impatience*; and if in this its violent Rage, it happen to break out to its beloved Sin, and to taste the forbidden Pleasure of it, it will thereby immediately *recover* all its impaired Strength, and become as *headstrong* and *outrageous* as ever; and so all that Ground which we get in a *Month's* Abstinence from our Sin, we shall lose in a *Moment's* Enjoyment of it. Upon this Account therefore it highly concerns us, if we would succeed in our Christian Warfare, to be very *watchful* and *circumspect*, to look well to our Steps, and not to approach too near to *any* Sin, but especially to any that we are strongly *inclined* to.

VIII. To give us good Success in this our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we be *diligent* and *industrious* in our particular *Callings*. This is one of those instrumental Duties which our Religion prescribes throughout the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Christian Warfare. Thus 1 Thes. iv. 10, 11. *We beseech you, Brethren, that you increase more and more, and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own Business; and work with your own Hands, as we commanded ye;* and this 2 Thes. iii. 10. *he backs with another, that if any would not work, they should not eat, i. e. that they should not be maintained in their Sloth and Idleness, and like Drones be permitted to dwell at ease in the Hive, and devour the Labours of the more industrious Bees;*

Bees; and this *verse* 11. he calls *walking disorderly* and *ver.* 8. and 11. he tells us that it was for this cause that he rather chose to *work with his own hands* for his *Livelihood*, than to be maintained by them, as he might justly have demanded; that he might make himself an *Example* of *Diligence* for them to *follow*. So also, *Eph.* iv. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, i. e.* employing himself in some honest *Calling*, *that he may have to give to him that needs*; the sense of all which is to oblige us to ingage ourselves in some honest *Calling* or *Employment*, and to be *diligent* and *industrious* in it.

And how necessary this is to secure us in the whole *Course* and *Progress* of our Religion, appears from hence, that we are naturally a sort of very *active* Beings, that must be employed one way or other; that we have a Mind within us, that will be always in *Motion*; that being a *spiritual* Subistence, and as *such*, of a quite different Nature from *dull* and *sluggish* Matter, will never admit of *Rest* and *Inactivity*; that derive all its Pleasures from *Action*, and hath nothing to live upon but the grateful Relish of its own *Motions*. And this being the state of that *active* Principle within us, that *constitutes* us Men, we had need to take great care to keep it *honestly* busied and employed. For it being naturally such an exceeding *busie* thing, it will be sure to find something or other to work upon; and if it be not constantly employed about *honest* and *lawful* things, it will quickly divert the Current of its *Motions* another way, and exert its Activity upon *dishonest* and *unlawful* ones. And hence

hence it is, that since the Apostasy of Human Nature, God hath placed the generality of Men in such Circumstances, wherein some honest *Calling*, and their *Diligence* and *Industry* therein, is indispensably *necessary* to their comfortable Subsistence. For he wisely considered that such was the *Indisposition* of our *degenerate* Natures to the *divine* and *spiritual* Exercises of Religion, that it would be impossible for *us* in this *imperfect* State, to keep our Minds *always* intent upon them, to fix our Thoughts *continually* upon him, and exert our Powers without any *Pause* or *Interruption* in perpetual Acts of *Love*, *Adoration*, and *Imitation* of him; that there is such a *Repugnance* in our Tempers to these blessed Operations, that if we had nothing else to do, they would soon grow *irksom* and *intolerable* to us; and therefore, lest being quite *tired* out with these spiritual Acts of Religion, we should *hate* them, and so turn the Current of our Activity into the *contrary* Channel, he hath placed us in such Circumstances, wherein we have frequent Opportunities to *rest* our wearied Minds from these *abstracted* Exercises in such *innocent* Employments, as are necessary to our comfortable Subsistence in this World. So that by putting us under the necessity of employing ourselves in secular Trades and Callings, he hath taken Care to *intercept* our Minds, that they may not fly off from the *pure* Acts of Religion into the contrary Impieties: and that when they are not *divinely* they may be *innocently* employed; and by diverting our Activity with *honest*, when it is weary of *spiritual* Exercise, he hath taken a wise Course to *confine* and *bound* it, and leave it less scope

Scope and Liberty to *rove* and make Incursions into *sinful* and *prohibited* Actions. And therefore as *Aristotle* commends *Archytas* for his Invention of Rattles, because Children by playing with them are kept from breaking Vessels of *use*; so ought we to admire the Wisdom and Goodness of God, for thus necessitating us to exert our Activity in *secular* Arts and Trades, because by thus *innocently* employing our *corrupt* and *busy* Natures, he hath taken an admirable Course to divert us from mischievous Actions.

And he having thus obliged us by our Necessities to follow some *honest* Calling for a comfortable Livelihood, he expects that we should be *diligent* and *industrious* in that *particular* Calling wherein his Providence hath placed us: For otherwise he loses his End; which was to restrain us from being *sinfully* active. by necessitating us to be *innocently* so. And now that by putting us into those Necessities by which we are put upon furnishing one another with those several Conveniences of Life, for the supply of which our respective Trades and Callings are intended, we by being *diligent* therein approve ourselves *faithful* Servants in the great Family of God, and by *industriously* discharging those *particular* Offices wherein he hath placed us, we act as *dutiful* Ministers of his Providence towards one another. Because by so doing we supply those Wants and Necessities which God hath *made*, and which he hath made to be supplied by *our* Office and Ministries; So that now to mind our own *Business*, is a part of our *Religion*, and it is that particular part to which God's Providence hath called us. If therefore we

are *idle* and *neglective* in this, we are undutiful Servants to the common Master of the World, how officious soever we may be in *other* matters. For this is the proper Work of our Office, and therefore if we are unfaithful in *this*, we can be faithful in *nothing*. Should the Bailiff of a Family *neglect* letting his Master's Lands and gathering in his Rents, he would be thought a *bad* Servant, how *diligent* soever he might be in the Kitchen or the Stables; and so if we are *remiss* in our *particular* Offices and Employments, we are *bad* Servants to God, how *sedulous* soever we may be either in the Offices of *other* Men, or in the *common* Services which we all owe him: and he that neglects his own Calling to serve God in his Closet or in the Church, is like an unfaithful Steward that neglects providing for the Family, to dress the Garden and water the Flowers.

It is true, as we ought not to devote to the *common* Service of God that Time and Attendance which by the Rules of Prudence and good Husbandry are appropriated to our *particular* Callings; so neither ought we to permit our particular Calling so to *ingross* our Time and Attendance as to leave none for our Prayers and those common Services, whether *private* or *publick*, which as Creatures and Christians we are obliged to render to our Creator. For as he that to *serve* God *neglects* his Calling is a *religious* Truant, so he that to *attend* his Calling *neglects* to serve God is a *prophane* Drudge. But for a truly *pious* and *industrious* Man it is not at all difficult so to keep his Business and his Religion *apart*, that as they may not *interfere* with one another; and faithfully to
discharge

discharge whatsoever his *Calling* exacts of him, and yet leave void Spaces enough in his time to do *all* that his *Religion* requires.

Neither are we obliged to be so *industrious* in our *Calling* as to deny ourselves any *moderate* Refreshments or Recreations, which are not only *useful*, but sometimes *necessary* to *breathe* our Spirits after they have been almost stifled in a Croud of Business and *divert* our wearied Thoughts, which like the Strings of a Lute by being *slackned* now and then will sound the sweeter when they are *wound up* again. But then we ought to take care that we do not turn our *Physick* into *Food*, and make that our *Business* which should be only our *Diversion*; that our Recreations be *short* and apt to *refresh*, but not to *steal away* our Minds from severer Employments. For *long* Sports and Recreations are like a *large* Entry to a *little* House, they take up so much Room in the *narrow* Compartments of our Time, that there is not Space enough left in it for the more *useful* Apartments; and so far as our Sports do exceed the Measures of *necessary* and *convenient* Recreation, they are *unwarrantable* Encroachments upon our *Calling* and *Religion*. It is true, as for the Measures of *Convenience*, they are not alike to *all*; for as for those whose large Fortunes have placed them beyond the Necessities of the World, they may *conveniently* allow themselves *larger* Portions of Recreation than those of meaner Circumstances, who having not yet made a competent Provision for their Families, are obliged in justice to a more *constant* Industry, lest they fall under St. Paul's Censure of being *worse than Infidels*. But how plentiful soever

our outward Condition may be, it will by no means warrant us either to live *idly*, or to make our *Recreations* our continual Employments; but the more Leisure we have from secular *Business*, the greater Portions of our Time we ought to consecrate to Religion; and since our *Bodies* and our *Families* are so liberally provided for, to be so much the more industrious in supplying the Necessities of our *Souls*, that so *these* may not be the only *miserable* things about us. But then our Natures being so *depraved*, as that they cannot dwell long on the severe Exercises of Religion, and yet so *active* as that, if in the Intervals of our Religion they be not *innocently* employed, they will be apt to run into *Mischief*, it is in our own Defence necessary, how prosperous soever our outward Condition may be, that we should find out some *honest* Business or other to keep our Activity *regularly* exercised. And this will be no hard matter for us to do, considering how many *generous*, *liberal*, and *ingenious* Employments there are, fit for Persons of the highest Rank and Condition. They may dedicate such Portions of their Time to the useful Studies of *Philosophy* or *History*, or of the *Laws* and *Customs* of their own Country; and such to the *Inspection* of their own Estates, or to *overlook* and *govern* their Families, and such to *examine* the Complaints of their Tenants, or the Necessities of their Neighbours, or to *reconcile* Differences, or *conciliate* Love and good Neighbourhood among those that are near or under them; in these and such like Employments they may *innocently* exercise their active Minds, and thereby not only divert themselves from *sinful* Courses,

Courses, but also render themselves very *useful* to the World.

But whatsoever our Condition in the World may be, it must doubtless be of very dangerous Consequence to our Religion not to be *innocently* and *usefully* employed. For as the wise *Cato* hath observed, *Nilil agendo, male agere discas, i. e.* by accustoming yourself to do *nothing*, you will most certainly learn to do *ill*. For your *busie* Mind, like Nature, will admit of no *Vacuum*, but must be *always full* of one thing or other; and it can no sooner dismiss its *pious* or *honest* Thoughts, but *vicious* and *unlawful* ones will be swarming about it. For *religious*, *lawful*, and *sinful* Objects, are the only Companions our Minds have to converse with, and therefore since they must and will be conversing with *one* thing or *other*, we ought to take great care that as soon as ever they have done entertaining *religious* Objects, they be presently supplied and presented with *lawful* ones, with some *honest* Business, or *innocent* Diversion; that so we may not be at Leisure to attend to those *sinful* Objects, which in the other's absence will be perpetually *crowding* and *thrusting* themselves upon us. For when we are neither *honestly* nor *religiously* employed, we shall be perfectly at leisure to attend to any Invitation to Sin; and since we must still be doing one thing or other, our having nothing *else* to do, will be a strong inducement to do that which is *evil*, and to spend our restless Activity in some *irregular* Course or other, accordingly as we are *tempted* and *inclined*. If we are of a *busie* and *pragmatical* Temper, our Leisure will presently invite us to be

intermeddling with other Folks Business, to be *tampering* with State Affairs, and casting new Models of Government and, *censuring* the Wisdom of those publick Administrations of which we do not understand the Reasons: If we are of a *forward*, *peevish*, and *untractable* Temper, we shall be apt, when we have nothing else to do, to be venting our Activity in *factious*, and *turbulent* Zeal, in *seditious* Pratings and Conspiracies, in *backbiting* our Adversaries, and *fetching* and *carrying* scandalous Reports to create Jealousies and Animosities between Neighbour and Neighbour. In a word, if we are of *sanguine* and *joyial* Dispositions, our idle Hours will be so many tempting Opportunities to *Intemperance* and *Wantonness*, *Prophaneness* and *Scurrility*, and all the other Wickednesses of a *lewd* and *dissolute* Conversation. If therefore we mean to be secured from *sinful* Actions, we must allow ourselves no leisure from *religious* or *honest* ones, which for the above-named Reason, we shall find utterly impracticable, if we be not *diligent* and *industrious* in some honest Calling.

But whilst Men's Minds are *honestly* employed, they will not be at leisure to listen to Temptation; and it will be difficult for any of those Inducements to Sin, which the Devil and outward Objects do perpetually suggest to us, to obtain Admittance to *speak* with our Thoughts, whilst they are thus taken up with *wiser* and *better* Company. But as soon as we dismiss *these*, we do in effect beckon Temptations to ourselves, and *invite* the Devil and the World to *invite* us to be wicked. For, as we say, *Opportunity makes the Thief*, i. e. it
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tempts him to steal; so when we give the Devil the Opportunity of an *idle Hour*, we do thereby tempt *him* to tempt *us*, and importunately invite him to *steal* away the Treasure of our Innocence, by putting the *Key* of it into his hand, and giving him a free *Access* to it. And though we should be firmly *resolved* not to sin, yet it is impossible we should be *safe* so long as we are at leisure to be *tempted*; because while we are at *leisure* we shall be very often *disputing* and *holding* Arguments with the Tempter; who by his *Quirks* and *Sophisteries* will many times circumvent such *Novices* as we, before we are aware. But when we are not only *resolved* against him, but are also so *employed* as that we are not at leisure to attend to him, it is past his Skill to fasten any Temptation upon us. Wherefore, if we would be secure in the Course of our Christian Warfare, we must follow S. *Jerom's* Counsel to his Friend *Rusticus*, *Semper boni aliquid operis facito, ut Diabolus te semper inveniat occupatum*, Be always doing one good Work or other, that so the Devil may always find thee busy

IX. To our *Course* and *Progress* in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should endeavour, so far as in us lies, to keep up a constant *Chearfulness* of *Spirit* in our Religion. It is doubtless a great Disgrace to our Religion to imagine (as too many *superstitious* Christians do) that it is an Enemy to *Mirth* and *Chearfulness*, and a severe Exactor of *pensive* Looks and *solemn* Faces; that Men are never serious enough till they are *moped* into Statues, and *cloistered* from all Society, but that of their own melancholy Thoughts: that

It is a Gospel-Duty to *recline* or to be *silent*, and retire themselves from the most innocent *Pleasures* and *Festivities* of Conversation; and in a word, that all kind of *Mirth* and *facetious* Humour is to be rankt among those *Idle Words* which our Saviour tells us shall be brought to Judgment, As if Religion were a *Caput mortuum*, a heavy, stark, insipid thing, that had neither *Heat*, nor *Life*, nor *Motion* in it; or were intended for a *Medusa's* Head to transform Men into Monuments of Stone. By which *false* Conceptions of it, they render it much more burthensom than it is in its *own* Nature. For to make Religion forbid us any thing that is *human* and *natural*, is to render it a real *Grievance* unto human Nature; it is to make our *Duty* run a tilt at the Principles of our *Being*, and set our *Conscience* and our *Nature* at Variance with one another. And therefore, since to be *risible* and *sociable*, is as natural to us as to be *reasonable*, to make our *Religion* an Enemy to our *Mirth* and *Conversation*, is to represent it as a tyrannical Invader of the essential *Liberties* and *Properties* of human Nature. It is true indeed, though it denies us not the Freedom of an *innocent* Humour, nor disallows those little *Plaisances* and inoffensive *Railleries* of Fancy which are sometimes requisite to *sauce* our Conversation, and give it a *quicker* Relish; yet hath it taken care to bound our Merriments with the necessary Precepts of *Sobriety* and *Gravity*, that so by too much whiffing up and down in the little *Levities* of Fancy, our Minds may not grow *vain*, and *light* and *trifling*, and be thereby indisposed to *serious* Thoughts and Reflections: But so long as we keep within
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the Bounds of *Sobriety*, and do not fall out into *malicious* or *scurrilous* or *prophane* Jestings, our Religion doth not only *connive* at our Mirth, but *commend* and *approve* it : and so remote is it from *cramping* those Strings and Sinews of the Mind, *Chearfulness* and *Action*, that it *recollects* their scatter'd Vigour, and *winds up* their Slackness to a true Harmony.

For it requires that our *Speech* should be *always with Grace*, Col. iv. 6. *i. e.* as some Expositors understand the Phrase, that it would not be *whining* and *melancholy*, but *sprightly* and *cheerful* ; it bids us *rejoice evermore*, 1 Thes. v. 16. and *rejoice in the Lord always, and again rejoice*, Phil. iv. 4. that is to endeavour to be cheerful in all Conditions, and to bear all Events with a *serene* and *lightsom* Mind. And therefore the Apostle reckons this among the blessed Fruits and Effects of that Divine Spirit which accompanies and animates Christianity, *viz.* *Joy*, or *Chearfulness*, Gal. v. 22. and this is one of the Particulars in which the same Apostle makes the *Christian* Laws to consist, as they stand opposed to the *Ritual* Laws of the Jews ; *the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e.* the Laws of the Christian Church *is not Meat and Drink, i. e.* consists not of Injunctions or Prohibitions of things that are of a *Ritual* or *indifferent* Nature ; but *Righteousness* and *Peace*, and *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv. 17. which three Particulars being opposed to things that are *unnecessary*, must by the Law of Oppositions denote things that are *necessary* ; and therefore as by *Righteousness* and *Peace*, must be meant *Justice* and *Peaceableness*, so by *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, must be meant *Chearfulness* and *Alacrity* in doing

doing the Will of God ; because Joy can be in no other Sense Matter of *necessary* Duty. By all which it is evident, that *Cbearfulness* of Temper is so far from being *discountenanced* by our Religion, that it is *required* and *injoined* by it, so far as it is in our Power and Choice. And indeed it highly becomes us who serve so good a Master, to be *free* and *cheerful*, and thereby to express a grateful sense of his Goodness, and of those glorious Rewards which we expect from his inexhaustible Bounty ; but as for a *gloomy* Look and *dejected* Countenance, it better beseems a Gally-slave than a Servant of God. And as *Cbearfulness* is a Duty that very well *becomes* our State, so it is highly *necessary* to support and carry us on in our Christian Warfare.

For *Cbearfulness* is Nature's best Friend : it *removes* its Oppressions, *enlivens* its Faculties, and keeps its Spirits in a *brisk* and *regular* Motion, and hereby renders it *easy* to itself, and *useful* and *serviceable* to God and Man. It dispels *Clouds* from the Mind and *Fears* from the Heart, and kindles and cherishes in us *brave* and *generous* Affections, and composes our Natures into such a *regular* Temper as is of all others the most fit to receive religious Impressions, and the Breathings of the Spirit of God. For what the Jews do observe of the Spirit of *Prophecy*, is as true of the Spirit of *Holiness*, that it dwells not with *Sadness*, but with *Cbearfulness* ; that being itself of a *calm* and *gentle* Nature, it loves not to reside with *black* and *melancholy* Passions, but requires a *composed* and *serene* Temper to act upon. And hence *Tertul.* in his *de Spectac.* *Deus præcepit Spiritum Sanctum.*

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utpote pro Naturæ suæ bono tenerum & delicatum, Tranquillitate & Lenitate & Quiete & Pace tractare; non Furore non Bile, non Ira, non Dolore inquietare, i. e. God hath commanded that the Holy Spirit who is of a tender and delicate *Nature*, should be entertained by us with Tranquility and Mildness, with Quietness and Peace, and that we should take care not to disturb him with Fury and Choler, or with Anger and Grief. And indeed, Melancholy naturally infects the Holy Spirit, and disturbs him in all his Operations; it overwhelms the Fancy with *black* Reeks and Vapours, and thereby *clouds* and *darkens* the Understanding, and *intercepts* the holy Spirit's Illuminations; and, like red coloured Glass before the Eye, causes the most lovely and attractive Objects to look *bloody* and *terrible*. It *distracts* the Thoughts, and renders them *wild, roving, and incoherent*; and thereby utterly *indisposes* them to Prayer and Consideration, and renders them *deaf* and *unattentive* to all good Motions and Inspirations. It *freezes* up the Heart with *despairing* Fears and Despondencies, and represents *easy* things as *difficult* to us, and *difficult* as *impossible*, and thereby *discourages* us from all those virtuous Attempts, to which the blessed Spirit doth so importunately *excite* and *provoke* us. In a word, it naturally *benums* and *stupefies* the Soul, *obstructs* its Motions, and makes it *listless* and *inactive*, and so by indisposing it to *co-operate* with the Holy Spirit, renders it an *incapable* Subject of his divine Grace and Influence. Thus melancholy you see, by its *sullen* and *malevolent* Aspects, doth obstinately *resist* and *counter-influence* the Holy Spirit, without whose Aid and Assistance

ance we can never hope to prosper in our spiritual Warfare.

Wherefore if we mean to succeed in this great Affair, it concerns us to use all honest and innocent Means to dispel this *black* and *mischievous* Humour, and to beget and maintain in our Minds a constant *Serenity* and *Chearfulness* of Temper; and whenever our Spirits begin to *droop* and *languish*, to betake ourselves to such *natural* Remedies, such *harmless* Diversions, Refreshments and Recreations, as are fit and proper to *raise* them up again; and not to suffer them to *sink* into a Bog of melancholy Humours, whilst it is in our Power by any honest Art or Invention to *support* them. Which if we can but effect, will be of vast Advantage to us in the whole Course of our Religion. For in an even *Chearfulness* of Temper, our Spirits will be always *lively*, *strong*, and *active*, and fit for the *best* and *noblest* Operations; they will give *Light* to our Understandings, *Courage* to our Hearts, and *Wings* to our Affections, so that we shall be able more *clearly* to discern divine and heavenly things, more *resolutely* to practise, and more *vehemently* to aspire after them; and our Considerations will be more *fixt*, our Devotions more *intent*, and all our spiritual Endeavours more *active* and *vivacious*. For a *cheerful* Temper will represent every thing *cheerfully* to us; it will represent God so *lovely*, Religion so *attractive*, the Rewards of it so *immense*, and the Difficulties of it so *inconsiderable*, and thereby inspire us with so much *Life* and *Courage*, as that none of all those spiritual Enemies we war and contend against, will be able to withstand our Resolution.

X. To our Course and Progress in this our spiritual Warfare, it is also necessary that we maintain in our Minds a constant *Sense* and *Expectation* of Heaven ; that since things of the other World are *future* and *invisible*, and consequently less apt to *touch* and *affect* us than these worldly Things which are continually *pressing* upon our Senses, we should as oft as we have Opportunity, withdraw our Thoughts from these *sensible* Objects, and retire into the *immaterial* World, and there entertain ourselves with the close *View* and *Contemplation* of the Joys and Glories it abounds with. For we are a sort of Beings that being compounded of *Flesh* and *Spirit*, are by these *opposite* Principles of our Nature allied to two *opposite* Worlds, and placed in the middle between *Heaven* and *Earth* as the common Center wherein those distant Regions meet. By our *spiritual* Nature we hold Communion with the *spiritual* World, and by our *corporeal* with this *earthly* and *sensible* one ; whose Objects being always *present* with us, and *striking* as they do immediately upon our Senses, we lie much more bare and open to them, than to those of the spiritual World. So that unless we now and then *withdraw* ourselves from these sensible things, which hang like a Cloud between, we can never have a free *Prospect* into that clear Heaven above them. And hence it becomes necessary that we should now and then make a solemn *Retirement* of our Thoughts from *earthly* Objects and Enjoyments, that so we may approach near enough to Heaven to *touch* and *feel* the Joys and Pleasures of it, which while we *transiently* behold in this croud of worldly Objects, is placed at such

a Distance from us, that it looks like a *thin, blue* Landskip, next to nothing; and hath not apparent Reality enough in it to raise our Desires and Expectations.

And hence we are commanded to *set our Affections upon*, or as it is in the Original, *to mind those things that are above*, Col. iii. 2. and that by these *things above*, he means the Enjoyments of Heaven, it is plain from *ver. 1.* where he expressly tells us, that by the *above* in which these things are, he means Heaven, *where Christ sits at the right Hand of God.* So that the Sense of the Precept is this, that we should fix in our Minds such *lively* Representations of the Glory and Reality of the Cœlestial State, as may raise in our Hearts a *longing* Desire and *earnest* Expectation of being made Partakers of it. Which *Hope* and *Expectation* he elsewhere enjoins us to *put on for a Helmet, i. e.* for a necessary Piece of *defensive* Armour against the Difficulties and Discouragements of our Christian Warfare, 1 Thes. v. 8. and Heb. vi. 19. *this hope which enters into that within the veil, i. e.* into Heaven, is said to be *the Anchor of the Soul both sure and stedfast, i. e.* it is that which *stays* and *secures* the Soul in the midst of those many *Storms* of Temptation it meets withal in its *Voyage* to Heaven; and it being so, we are bid to *look to* and imitate our Blessed Lord, *who for the Joy that was set before him endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of God*, Heb. xii. 2. The meaning of all which is, that we should earnestly endeavour to *fix* in our Minds a *vigorous* Sense and Expectation of that immortal Happiness with which God hath promised to crown all that come
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off Conquerors from this spiritual Warfare ; that all along as we *march* we should keep Heaven in our *Eye*, and *incourage* ourselves with the *Hope* of it to *charge through* all those Difficulties and Temptations that oppose us in the way ; in a Word, that we should frequently *awaken* in our Minds the glorious *Thoughts* of a blessed Immortality, and possess ourselves with a lively *Expectation* of enjoying it, if we *hold out* to the End.

Which is a Duty of a vast Consequence to us in the *Course* of our spiritual Warfare. For Heaven being the *End* and *Reward* of our Warfare, must needs be the grand *Encouragement* thereunto ; and consequently if once we *lose Sight* of Heaven, and suffer *earthly* things to *interpose* and *eclipse* the Glory and Reality of it, our Courage will never be able to *bear up* against those manifold Temptations that do continually assault us. But whilst we continue under a *lively Sense* of that blessed Recompence of Reward, *that* will so *spirit* and *invigorate* our Resolution, that nothing will be able to *withstand* it ; and all the *Terrors* and *Allurements* that Sin can propose, will be forced to *fly* before it and to *retreat* like so many impotent Waves that dash against a Rock of Adamant. For while we are under a lively Sense and Expectance of the Happiness above, we live as it were in the *Mid-way* between Heaven and Earth, where we have an open Prospect of the Glories of *both*, and do plainly see how *faint* and *dim* these *below* are in comparison with those *above* ; how they are forced to *sneak* and *disappear* in the Presence of those eternal *Splendors*, and to *show* their *vanquish'd* Beauties,

Beauties, as the Stars do when the Sun appears. And whilst we *interchangeably* turn our Eyes from one to t'other, how fruitlessly do the *Pleasures, Profits, and Honours* below, importune us to abandon the *Joy* and *Glories* above, and with what Indignation do we listen to the Proposals of such a *senseless* and *ridiculous* Exchange? And could we but always keep ourselves at this stand, we should be so *fortified* with the Sight of those happy Regions *above*, that no Temptation from *below* would ever be able to *approach* us; and the Sense that we are going on to that blessed State, would carry us through all the *weary* Stages of our Duty with an *indefatigable* Vigour. For what may a Man not do with Heaven in his *Eye*, with that *potent*, I had almost said *Omnipotent* Encouragement before him? To *pull out* a right Eye, to *cut off* a right Hand. to *tear* a darling Lust from his Heart, even when it is *wrapt* about it, and *twisted* with its Strings, what an *easy* Atchievement is it to a Man that hath a Heaven of immortal Glories in his *View*? The Hope of which is enough to recommend even *Racks* and *Torments*, and turn the Flames of Martyrdom into a Bed of Roses. For it was this blessed Prospect that enabled the good old *Martyrs* to *triumph* so gloriously as they did in the midst of their Sufferings; they knew that a few Moments would put an End to their Miseries, and that when once they had *weathered* those short *Storms*, they should arrive at a most blessed *Harbour*, and be crowned at their *landing*; and that from thence they should look back with infinite Joy and Delight upon the dangerous *Sea* they had escaped, and for ever bless those *Storms* and *Winds* that

heard, and *stifle* those devout and pious Affections which have been raised and excited in us ; but instead of so doing, we would devote at least some good Portion of it to the *Instruction* of our Families, and to the *private* Exercise of our Religion, to *Meditation* and *Prayer*, to the *Examination* of ourselves concerning our *past* Behaviour, and the *reinforcing* our Resolution to behave ourselves better for the future ; if, I say, we would thus spend our *Lord's Day*. we should doubtless find ourselves *better* Men for it all the *Week* after ; we should go into the World again with much *better* Affections, and *stronger* Resolutions, with our Graces more *vigorous*, and our bad Inclinations more *reduced* and *tamed* ; and whereas the Jews were to gather *Manna* enough on their *sixth* Day, to feed their *Bodies* on the ensuing *Sabbath*, we should gather *Manna* enough upon our *Sabbath*, to feed and strengthen our *Souls* all the *six Days* after.

But to this we must also add frequent *Communion*s with one another in the *Holy Sacrament*, which is an Ordinance *instituted* on purpose by our blessed Saviour, for the *improving* and *furthering* us in our Christian Warfare. For besides that herein we have one of the most *puissant* Arguments against Sin represented by *visible* Signs to our Sense, *viz.* the bloody *Sacrifice* of our blessed Lord to *expiate* and make *Atonement* for it ; besides that those *bleeding* Wounds of his which are here represented by the *breaking* of the *Bread*, and *pouring out* of the *Wine*, do proclaim our Sins his *Assassins* and *Murderers*, the Thoughts of which, if we had any Ingenuity in us, were enough to
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incense in us the most *implacable* Indignation against them ; besides that, his sufferings for our Sins, of which this sacred *Solemnity* is a *lively* Picture, do horribly *remonstrate* God's *Displeasure* against them, who would not be induced to pardon them upon any *meaner* Expiation than the Blood of his Son, than which *Hell* itself is not a more *dreadful* Argument to *scare* and *terrify* us from them ; in a word, besides that, his so freely *submitting* and *offering* up himself to be a *Propitiation* for us, of which this holy Festival is a solemn *Commemoration*, is an Expression of *Kindness* sufficient to *captivate* the most *ungrateful* Souls, and *extort* Obedience from them ; besides all this, I say, as it is a *Feast* upon the *Sacrifice* of his Body and Blood, it is a Federal Rite, whereby God and we, by *Feasting* together, do, according to the ancient Customs both of *Jews* and *Heathens*, mutually *oblige* ourselves to one another ; whereby God, by *giving* us the *mystical* Bread and Wine, and we by *receiving* them, do mutually *ingage* ourselves to one another upon those sacred Pledges of Christ's Body and Blood, that we will *faithfully* perform each other's Part of that everlasting *Covenant* which was purchased by him. And what can be a greater *Restraint* to us when we are solicited to any Sin, than the Sense of being under such a dreadful *Vow* and *Obligation* ? With what Face *dare* we listen to any Temptation to Evil, when we remember how lately we solemnly *ingaged* ourselves to the contrary, and took the *Sacrament* upon it ? And verily I doubt it is *this* that lies at the bottom of that seeming *modest* Pretence of *Unworthiness*, which Men are wont to urge in Excuse for their

Neglect of the Sacrament; namely, that they *love* their Lusts, and cannot resolve to *part* with them, and therefore are *afraid* to make such a solemn *Abjuration* of them, as the eating and drinking the consecrated Elements implies. And I confess, if *this* be their Reason, they are *unworthy* indeed, the more *Shame* for them, but it is such an *Unworthiness* as is so far from *excusing*, that it only *aggravates* their Neglect. For, for any Man to plead that he *dares* not receive the Sacrament because he is resolved to *sin on*, is to make that which is his *Fault*, his *Apology*, and to excuse *one* Sin with *another*. Wherefore if we are heartily *resolved* by the Grace of God to *reform* and *amend*, let us abstain no longer from this great Federal Rite, upon Pretence of *Unworthiness*. For it is by the use of *this* among *other* Means, that we are to *improve* and grow more and more *worthy*. For the very *Repetition* of our Resolution, as I have shewed above, is a proper Means of *strengthening* and *confirming* it; and certainly it must needs be much more so, when it is *renewed* and *repeated* with the Solemnity of a Sacrament. And therefore it is worth observing, how much Care our Lord hath taken, in the very Constitution of our Religion, to oblige us to a *constant*, *solemn* Repetition of our good Resolutions. For at our first Entrance into *Covenant* with him, we are to be *baptized*, in which Solemnity we do openly *renounce* the Devil and all his Works, and religiously *devote* ourselves to his Service. But because we are apt to *forget* this our Baptismal *Vow*, and the *Matter* of it is *continually* to be performed, and more than *one* World depends upon it, therefore he hath thought fit not to

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trust wholly to this *first* Engagement, but hath so methodized our Religion, as that we are ever and anon obliged to give him *new* Security. For which End he hath instituted this *other* Sacrament, which is not like that of *Baptism*, to be received by us *once for all*, but to be often *reiterated* and *repeated*, that so upon the frequent *Returns* of it, we might still be obliged to *repeat* over our old Vows of Obedience. For he hath not only in-joined us that we should *do this in Remembrance of him*, Luke xxii. 19. *i. e.* that we should celebrate this sacred Festival in the Memory of his Passion; but by thus doing the Apostle tells us we are to *continue* the Memorial of it to the end of the World, or *to shew his death till he comes*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And that this doth not, like the Precept of *Baptism*, oblige us for *once* only and no more, is evident from the foregoing Words of this last recited Text, *as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup*, which plainly shews, that these sacramental Elements are to be *more* than *once* received by us. It is true, how *often* it is to be done neither Christ nor his Apostles have any where *defined*, but if we consult *Primitive Example* (which in the Absence of *express* Precept is the *best* Rule to determine ourselves by) we shall find that it was very *frequently* received. For from some Passages in the Acts of the Apostles, it seems *probable* that Christians did then communicate *every Day*; as particularly Acts ii. 46. where they are said to *continue daily with one Accord in the Temple and breaking Bread*, κατ' ὄμιλον, *in the House*, that is, as it seems *probable*, in some upper Room of the Temple; though *perhaps* this *daily* may refer only to the

Lord's Day, agreeable to that Acts xx. 7. *on the first day of the Week when the Disciples came together to break Bread*, Paul preached unto them. But it is certain that whensoever they assembled to the publick Worship, they closed it with the *Lord's Supper*; which they did for a great while in the *Western Churches every day* in the Week, and in the *Eastern*, as St. Basil tells us, Epist. 289. *four times a Week*, besides *Festivals*. So that allowing for our *Declensions* from the *Primitive Zeal and Devotion*, one would think that to communicate now *once in four Weeks* should be a very *moderate Proportion*. But as for those that *wholly neglect* this sacred Institution, for my own part I see not how they can *excuse* themselves from being guilty of a wilful *Rebellion* against their Saviour, or with what Confidence they can expect either that he should *assist* them with his *Grace* on the *Way*, or *crown* them with his *Salvation* in the End, when they so *perversly* turn their Backs upon an Ordinance which he hath solemnly instituted for a *Conveyance* of the *one* and a *Seal* of the *other*.

But would we take that Care that becomes us, to *prepare* ourselves for, and *frequent* his holy Institution, there is no doubt but we should find it of mighty Advantage to us in the whole *Course* of our Religion. For till we are arrived to a *confirmed* State of good, our holy Fervours will be very apt to *cool*, our Good Purposes to *slacken* and *unwind*, and our vertuous Endeavours to *languish* and *tire*; and therefore unless we take Care frequently to *revive* our Religion, with this spiritual *Repast* and *Restorative*, and still to add *new Fuel* to it as the Flame decays, it will quickly *pine away*
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and *expire*. But if upon the *solemn* Returns of this sacred Festival, we would *constantly* come with due Preparation to our Master's Table, and here *renew* our Vows, *re-invigorate* our Resolutions, *repair* our Decays, and put our *sluggish* Graces into a new *Fermentation*, we should find our Religion not only *live*, but *thrive*, and be still acquiring *new* Degrees of Strength and Activity. But because this Argument hath been already so fully handled in our Practical Treatises, particularly by the Reverend Dr. *Patrick* in his *Mensa Mystica* and *Christian Sacrifice*, I shall refer the Reader thither for the farther Consideration of it.

And thus, with all the Brevity I could, I have endeavoured to give an Account of those *Duties* which are necessary in the *Course* and *Progress* of our *Christian Warfare*.

S E C T. IV.

Containing certain Motives to animate Men against the Difficulty of those Duties which appertain to the Course of our Christian Warfare.

HOW *necessary* and *useful* to us those aforesaid Duties are, in the *Course* of our Christian Warfare, hath been sufficiently shewn. So that now there is nothing that our *Sloth* and *Unwillingness* can object against them, but only this, that they are very *difficult*, and do require more of our *Time*, and *Care*, and *Pains* than we can conveniently spare from our other necessary Occasions; that the Practice of them is so *unpleasant* and

severe, and attended with so much *Cumber* and *Trouble*, that we very much doubt we shall never be able to *go through* with them. And therefore to remove this Objection out of Mens way, and to exite them to the Practice of these necessary Duties, I shall for a Conclusion of this Argument add, to what hath been said of it, these following *Considerations*.

1. That whatsoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank ourselves* for it,

2. That in the *Course* of our *Sin* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in our Warfare *against* it.

3. That how *difficult* soever this Warfare may be, it must be *endured*, or that which is a great deal *worse*.

4. That though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *possible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to ourselves.

5. That the Practice of these *Duties* is not so *difficult*, but that it is fairly consistent with all our other necessary *Occasions* and *Diversions*.

6. That the *Difficulty* is such as will certainly *abate* and *wear off* by Degrees, if we *constantly* practise them.

7. That with the *Difficulty* of them there is a world of present *Peace* and *Satisfaction* intermingled.

8. That their *Difficulty* is abundantly *compensated* by the final Reward of them.

I. Consider that whatsoever *Difficulty* there is in the Practice of them, we may *thank ourselves* for it. For if we had betaken ourselves to the Practice of Religion as soon as we were *capable* of it, before we had *entered* ourselves into sinful Courses, and had *therein* contracted sinful Habits and Inclinations, we might have *prevented* those Difficulties which we now *complain of*. For our Religion was made *for* and adapted *to* our Nature, and would have sweetly *accorded* with all its Affections and Propensions, had we not *viti-ated* them by our own wilful Sin, and clapt a *pre-ternatural* Bias upon them. But though the Light be *naturally* congruous to the Eye, yet if through a Distillation of ill Humours into it, the Eye grow *sore* and *weak*, there is nothing more *grievous* and *offensive* to it. And so it is with Religion, which to the *pure* and *uncontaminated* Nature of a Man, is the most *grateful* and *agreeable* thing in the World; but if by our own ill Government we *disease* our Nature, and *deprave* its Primitive Constitution, it is no wonder that Religion, which was so well *proportioned* to it in its *Purity*, should sit *hard* and *uneasy* upon it, in its *Apostacy* and *Corruption*. For to a Man that is in a *Fever*, every thing is *bitter*, even Honey, which when he is *well* is exceeding *sweet* and *grateful*; but the *Bitterness* which he tastes is not in the *Honey*, but in the *Gall* which overflows his own Palate; and so to a Nature that is *diseased* with any unnatural Lust, that which is most *congruous* to *itself*, will be most *nauseous* to its *Disease*, and those Duties which in its *Health* it would have embraced with the greatest *Pleasure*, will in its *Sickness* be
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the greatest *Burthen* and *Oppression* to it. And when we have spoiled the *Purity* of our Constitution, and are *degenerated* from the *human* Nature into the *brutal* or *diabolical*, it is no great wonder that the Religion of a *Man* should be a Burthen to the Nature of a *Beast* or a *Devil*. So that whatsoever *Difficulties* there are in Religion, they arise not out of the Nature of the *things* it requires, but out of the perverse *Indispositions* of our Natures to them; and these were for the most part contracted by *ourselves*; so that instead of *complaining* of the Difficulty, we ought to *strive* and *contend* the more earnestly against it. because we may *thank ourselves* for it. When a Man hath played the Fool, and set his House *on Fire*, the Sense of his own Folly ought to make him more industrious to *extinguish* it; but if instead of so doing, he should sit with his Hands in his Bosom, and complain of the Mischief, and the Difficulty of *stopping* it, what would Folks say of him? Mischievous Creature, doth it become thee to sit here *idly* complaining of the Effect of thy own Villany, whilst it is yet in thy Power, wouldst thou but *bestir* thyself, to *quench* the Flame, and prevent the *spreading* of it? For shame get up and do thy utmost Endeavour to *repair* thy own Act, and to extinguish this spreading Mischief of which thou art the *Author*. Since therefore we have been so obstinately foolish as to *set fire* to our own Souls, and *kindle* in them by our vicious Courses such destructive *Flames* of unnatural Lust, how monstrously *ridiculous* is it, whilst it is yet in our Power to extinguish them, to sit *reclining* and *complaining* of the Difficulty of it, and in the mean

meantime permit them to *rage* and *burn on* without Interruption? O miserable Men, if they are so *hard* to be quenched, who may ye *thank* for it? Was it not you that kindled them, and do you fit idly *complaining* of your own Act, when you should be the more industrious to *repair* the Mischief of it, because it is *your own*. For shame *arise* and *bestir* yourselves, and since you are conscious that the *Difficulties* of your Religion are of your own *creating*, and that those Lusts which *indispose* ye to it are the Products of your own *Actions*, let this excite ye to a more *vigorous* Endeavour to *subdue* and *conquer* them.

II. Consider that in the *Course* of your *Sins* there is a great deal of *Difficulty*, as well as in your Warfare *against* them. For I dare appeal to your own Experience whether you have not found a great deal of *Hardship* in Wickedness, especially while you were *educating* and *training up* your Natures to it? Did not your Nature oftentimes *recoil* and *start* and *boggle* at your vicious Actions; and were you not fain sometimes to *curb*, and sometimes to *spur* it, to commit many *Outrages* and *Violences* upon it, whilst you are *backing* and *managing* it, before you could reduce it to a *thorough Pace* in Iniquity? How often have you put your *modest* Nature to the *Blush*, as the sense of a *filthy* and *uncomely* Action, whilst your wicked Will hath been dragging it along like a *timorous* Virgin to an Adulterer's Bed? and what terrible *Shrieks* have your Consciences many times given in the midst of your sinful Commissions, when you were acting the first *Rapes* upon your Innocence? How many a *pensive* Mood hath the *Review* of
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your sinful Pleasures cost you, and what *Swarms* of Horror and dreadful Expectation hath the *Reflection* on your past Guilt raised in your Minds? And then with what excessive *Difficulty* have you been fain to practise some Vices. only to get an *Habit* of practising them more *easily*? How often have you been forced to *swallow* Sickness to drink dead *Palsies* and foaming *Epilepsies*, to render your Intemperances *familiar* to you, and in what *Qualms*, and *fainting* Sweats, and *sottish* Confusions have you many times awaked, before ever you could connaturalize your *midnight* Revels to your Temper? And when with so much *Labour* and *Violence*, you have pretty well trained and *exercised* yourselves in this hellish Warfare, and thereby rendred it *natural* and *habitual* to you, to how many Inconveniencies hath it daily *exposed* you, and what *base* and *unmanly* Shifts hath it put you upon, to *extricate* yourselves out of those *Difficulties* wherein it hath *involved* you? What violent *Passions* and *Perturbations* doth it raise in your Minds, and into what *wild* Tumults of Action doth it frequently *hurry* you? In a word, how doth it *perplex* and *intrigue* the whole Course of your Lives, and *intangle* ye in a Labyrinth of *Knavisb* Tricks and Collusions; so that many times you are at your *Wits end*, and know not which way to *turn* yourselves? All *these* Difficulties, and a great many *more*, which I cannot presently think of, you must have contended with in a *sinful* Course of Action, if you have made any considerable Experiment of it.

And do you complain of the *Difficulty* of persevering in Religion; *you* that have so *couragiously* persevered

persevered in a *worse* way against Difficulties that are as *great*, all things considered, if not *greater*; you that have hitherto sinned on so *industriously*, that have broke through so many strong *Barricades* to come at and enjoy your Lusts, are you not ashamed to *start* and *boggle* as you do, at the Difficulties of Virtue and Religion? Look but how the *industrious* Sinner *upbraids* you? His way *leads* directly to *Ruin*, and he *knows* it, and yet he *presses* on couragiously, as if he were ambitious to be a *Hero* in Iniquity, and *charges* through all the *Modesty* of Human Nature, through all his native *Sense* of a God and a Divine Vengeance; he *marches* forward through *Infamy* and *Diseases*, through *Dangers* and a world of *Inconveniences*, and offers a kind of *Violence* to *Hell*, as if meant to *force* open its brazen Portal, and enter *headlong* into it before it is ready to receive him, whilst you in the mean time, like a Company of *Crest-faln* Creatures, stand *shivering* at a few trifling Difficulties in your way, though you have *Heaven* for your *End*, and a *Crown* of Glory for your Reward.

In short therefore, this is the true State of your Case; chuse which side you please, whether to march under *Christ's*, or the *Devil's* Banner; you must expect before-hand to encounter *some* Difficulties, yea, and perhaps as *great* on the *one* side as on the *other*; and if so, then you have little else to do but to compare their *Ends*, and to consider which of the two is most *elegible*, a Crown of *Glory*, or eternal *Torment*.

III. Consider that how *difficult* soever this your spiritual Warfare may be, it must be *endured*,

or that which is much more *intolerable*. I confess were it not absolutely *necessary*, we might with some Colour of Reason urge the *Difficulty* of it, to *excuse* ourselves from *undertaking* and *prosecuting* it; but when our Case is such, as that we must either *conquer* or *perish*, *swim* through, or *sink* under the Difficulties we *complain* of, the matter will admit of no further *Debate*, but we must e'en resolve of the *two* Evils to *chuse* that which is the *least*. When the Ship hath *sprung* a Leak, it is Madness for the Mariners to sit still and complain of the *Pains* and *Labour* of Pumping; for in the Extremity they are in, there is no more to be said, they must *pump* or *perish*; and it is not to be debated where there is so vast an *Inequality* between the Objects of their Choice, which of the *two* they were best to fix upon, whether to *take Pains* for the present to *secure* the Ship, or to *sit still* and suffer themselves to be *swallowed* up in the Ocean. And thus it is in the Case before us: our Soul hath sprung a Leak, and let into its *Holds* those *Stygian* Waters of *sensual* and *diabolical* Lust, which will *sink* us down to Hell if they be not pumped out again; and this is not to be done without a great deal of Labour and Difficulty. But what then; were we not better labour for a *while* than perish *for ever*? Do we talk of *Labour* when our Souls are at *stake*, and our immortal Life is upon the Brink of an everlasting *well* or *ill-being*? In other Cases we never think much to endure a *present* Inconvenience for the Prevention of a *future* Mischief; we are content to *fast*, when we perceive it is necessary to *obviate* an approaching *Fever*, to be *cupped* and *scarified* with all the Artifice of
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Pain to *prevent* or *remove* a dangerous Disease; and in all other Cases are generally willing to prolong our Torment that we may be longer a dying; except where the *Prescription* is *Virtue*, and the *Death* prescribed against is *eternal*; though this be the most formidable Mischief of all, as being the utmost *Consummation* of human Misery, and compared with which all the *Labours* and *Difficulties* of Religion have not the Proportion of a gentle *Flea-biting* to the acutest Torments of the *Rack* or *Stone*. For I beseech you to consider, will it not be easier for you to endure the *short* Agonies of a bitter Repentance, than the horrid Despair of a damned Ghost for ever; to thwart a *foolish* and *unreasonable* Lust, than to lie *roaring* to Eternity upon the Rack of a guilty Conscience? Is there any proportion between your *abstaining* from the Pleasures of Sin that are but for a *Moment*, and your being *excluded* from Heaven and all Hope of Happiness *for ever*? Alas! if it be so *difficult* to you to *contend* with an evil Habit, to struggle with a stiff and obstinate Inclination, how difficult will it be to *dwell with everlasting Burnings*, and suffer the dire Effects of an *unappeasable* Vengeance to Eternity? Wherefore since we are under an absolute Necessity of enduring the *one* or *the other*, in the Name of God let us act like Men, and of the *two* Evils chuse that which is most *tolerable*.

IV. Consider that though it be *difficult*, yet there is nothing in it but what the Grace of God will render *possible* to us, if we be not *wanting* to ourselves. I confess the *Necessity* of it would be no Argument to engage us to undertake it, were
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it not a *possible* Undertaking ; yea, and readily acknowledge, that it very far exceeds *our* poor Possibility *singly* and *nakedly* considered. So that if we were left to *struggle* with the Difficulty of it in our own single Strength, we might justly *despair* of Success, and so tamely *lie down* and *yield* ourselves *foiled* and *defeated*. But God be praised this is not our Case ; for though when we cast our Eyes upon the many *violent* Inclinations to evil that are *within* us, and upon the *numberless* Temptations to Evil that are *about* us ; when we seriously reflect upon the *Weakness* of our Reason, and the *Strength* of our *Lust*, and the *Number* and *Nearness* and *Prevalency* of those Objects from without that are continually *pressing upon* and *assaulting* our good Resolutions ; though, I say, when we reflect upon all this. we are ready to cry out as *Elisha's* Servant did when he beheld the City compassed with Horses and with Chariots, *Alas, Master, how shall we do ?* How shall we be able to withstand all this mighty Army of Enemies ? yet if we turn our Eyes from our own Weakness, and our *Enemies* Strength, to those gracious Promises of *Assistance* which the Father of Mercies hath made to us, we shall quickly be able to answer *ourselves*, as *Elisha* did *him*, *Fear not*, O my Soul, *for they that are with us are more*, and more powerful, *then they that are against us*. For we have with us not only the *outward* Arguments of Religion, which are of infinite *more* Force than any *outward* Inducement to Vice whatsoever, we have with us not only the holy *Angels* of God, who are as *willing*, and more *able* to *direct* and *strengthen* us, than all the infernal *Furies*

to *insnare* and *captive* us ; but we have with us also the Almighty Spirit of God, who by the *Oeconomy* of Heaven, and the *Promise* of our Lord, is obliged to *minister* to us in all our Necessities, and to *aid* and *assist* us against all those Difficulties which would be otherwise *too hard* for us, if we were left to *ourselves*. So that if we do but hold true to our own Interest, and take Care that we do not drive him away from us, by siding wilfully with our own Enemies against him, we *shall* not, no, we *cannot* miscarry ; unless (which is *impossible*) some such Temptation should befall us, as neither *we* nor *he* can resist and cope with. For till by our wilful Sin we have forfeited our Title to the Promise of *his* Assistance, we are as sure of *his* Help in all things that necessary, as we can be of our *own* Endeavour ; and it is not more in our Power to do what we *can* by the Strength of our own *Faculties*, than it is to engage him to *enable* us to do what we *cannot* without his *Aid* and *Assistance*. For by faithfully *endeavouring* to persevere in well-doing, we intitle ourselves to all the necessary Assurances of his Grace, and so long as this *Title* continues, we are Masters not only of our *own* Strength but of *his* too, and can do not only whatsoever is within our *own* Power *without* him, but also whatsoever is in *his* Power concurring *with ours*.

So that though our Warfare be *difficult*, it cannot be *impossible*, unless *we* will have it so. For to be sure there is nothing in it that can be too hard for *God's* Grace *co-operating* with the Powers of *our* Nature ; and therefore there can be nothing in it too hard for *us*, whilst it is in our Power

to *secure* ourselves of *that* his gracious Co-operation.

Wherefore let us stand *bogling* no longer at the Difficulty of our Progress in Religion, since, God be praised, there is nothing required of us beyond what we are *able*; do you but *your* Part, which is only what you *can*, and then doubt not but God will do *his*; put forth but your *best*, *heart*y Endeavour, and earnestly *implore* his Aid and Assistance, and if *then* you miscarry, let Heaven answer for it. But if upon a Pretence that your Work is too *difficult*, and your Enemies too *mighty* for you. you lay down your Arms and resolve to contend with them no longer, let Heaven and Earth judge between God and you, which is to be charged with your Ruin; God, that so graciously *offered* you his Help, that stretched out his Hand to *raise* ye up, tendered you his Spirit to *guard* and *conduct* ye through all Oppositions to eternal Happiness; or you, that would not be *persuaded* to do any thing for yourselves, but rather chose to *perish* with *Ease*, than take any *Pains* to be *saved*.

V. Consider that the Practice of these Duties is not so *difficult*, but that it is fairly consistent with all your other necessary *Occasions*. When Men are told how many Duties are necessary to their successful *Progress* in Religion, what *Patience* and *Constancy*, what frequent *Examinations* and *Trials* of themselves, what *lively Thoughts* and *Expectations* of Heaven, &c. they are apt to conclude, that if they should engage to do *all* this, they must resolve to do nothing *else*, but even shake Hands with all their *secular* Business and Diversions,

Diversions, and *cloister* up themselves from all other Affairs. Which is a very great Mistake, proceeding either from their not *considering*, or not *understanding* the Nature of these religious Exercises, the greatest part of which are such as are to be *wholly* transacted in the Mind, whose Motions and Operations are much more *nimble* and *expedite* than those of the Body, and so may be very well *intermixt* with our secular Employments, without any *Let* or *Hindrance* to them. For what great time is there required for a Man now and then to revolve a few *wise* and *useful* Thoughts in his Mind, to *consider* the Nature of an Action when it *occurs*, and *reflect* upon an Error when it is *past* and hath *escaped* him? I can consider a Temptation when it is *approaching* me, and with a Thought or two of Heaven or Hell *arm* my Resolution against it in the twinkling of an Eye; I can look up to Heaven with an Eye of earnest *Expectance*, and send my Soul thither in a short *Ejaculation* without interrupting my Business; and yet *these* and such as these, do make up a great part of those religious Exercises wherein the proper Duty of our Christian Warfare consists. And though to the due Performance of these Duties, it will be sometimes necessary that our Minds should dwell *longer* upon them, yet it is to be considered that when once we are *entered* upon the Practice of them, our Mind will be much more at *Leisure* to attend to them; for then it will be in a great Measure taken off from its *wild* and *unreasonable* Vagaries, from its *sinful* Designs and *lewd* Contrivances, from its *Phantastick* Complacencies in the *Pleasures* of Sin, and

anxious Reflections on the *Guilt* and Danger of it; and when all this Rubbish is thrown out of the Mind, there will be room enough for good Thoughts to dwell in it, without *interfering* with any of our necessary *Cares* and *Diversions*. For would we but give these our *religious* Exercises as *much* Room in our Minds as we did *heretofore* freely allow to our *Sins*, they would ask no more, but leave us as much at *Leisure* for our other Affairs as ever.

I confess there are some of these Duties that exact of us their *fixt* and *stated* Portions of Time, such as our Morning *Consideration* and *Prayer*, our Evening *Examination* and *Prayer*, our religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, and our *preparing* for and *receiving* the Holy Sacrament; but all this may be very well spared without any *Prejudice* to any of our lawful Occasions. For what great matter of Time doth it ask for a Man to think over a few good Thoughts in the Morning, and *fore-arm* his Mind with them against the Temptations of the Day; to recommend himself to God in a *short* *pithy*, and *affectionate* Prayer, and *repeat* his Purpose and Resolution of Obedience? what an easy Matter were it for you to borrow so many Moments as would suffice for *this* Purpose from your *Bed*, and your *Comb* and *Looking-glass*? And as for the Evening, when your Business is over, it is a very hard Case if you cannot spare so much time either from your Company or Refreshments, as to make a short *Review* of the Actions of the Day; to *confess* and beg *Pardon* of the *Evils* you have fallen into, or to *bless* God for the *Good* you have *done*, and the *Evils* you have *avoided*, and
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then to recommend yourselves to his Grace and Protection for the future. And as for your religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, it is only the *seventh* Part of your Time; and can you think much to devote *that*, or at least the *greatest* Part of that, to him who gives you your *Being* and *Duration*? And lastly, as for your receiving the *Lord's Supper*, it is at most but *once* a Month that you are *invited* to it, and it is a hard Case, if out of so great a proportion of Time you cannot afford a *few* Hours to *examine* your *Defects*. and to *quicken* your *Graces*, and to *dress* and *prepare* yourselves for that blessed Commemoration. Alas! how *easy* were all this to a *willing* Mind? And if we had but *half* that Concern for our Souls and everlasting Interest that we have for our Bodies, we should count such things as these not *worth* our mentioning. How *disingenuous* therefore is it for Men to make such *tragical* Out-cries as they do of the *Hardship* and *Difficulty* of this spiritual Warfare, when there is nothing at all in it that *intrenches* either on their *secular* Callings, or *necessary* Diversions; when they may be going *onward* to Heaven while they are doing their *Business*, and *mortifying* their Lusts even in the Enjoyment of their *Recreations*, and so take their Pleasure both *here* and *hereafter*?

VI. Consider that the Difficulty of these Duties is such, as certainly will *abate* and *wear off* by Degrees, if we *constantly* practise them. For in all Undertakings whatsoever, it is *Use* that makes *Perfection*, and that which is exceeding *hard* to us at *first*, either through want of *Skill* to manage, or *Inclination* to practise it, will by

degrees grow *easier* and *easier*, as we are more and more *accustomed* and *familiarized* to it. And this we shall find by Experience, if we constantly exercise ourselves in these *progressive* Duties of our Religion, which to a Mind that hath *been* altogether *unacquainted* with them, will at *first* be very difficult. It will go against the Grain of a *wild* and *ungoverned* Nature, to be confined from its *extravagant* Ranges by the *strict* Ties of a religious *Discipline*; and to reduce a *roving* Mind to severe Consideration. or a *fickle* one to Constancy and Resolution, or an *unreflecting* one to Self-examination; raise up an *earthly* Mind to *heavenly* Thoughts and Expectations; and confine a *listless* and *regardless* one to strict Watchfulness and Circumspection; to confine a *carnal* Mind to frequent Sacraments; or an *indeavour* and careless one to its *daily* and *weekly* Periods of Devotion, will at the first no doubt be very *painful* and *tedious*; but after we have *persisted* in, and for a while *accustomed* ourselves to it, we shall find it quickly grow more *natural* and *easy* to us, and from being *grievous* it will become *tolerable*, from being tolerable *easy*, and from being easy *delightful*. For when once we come to feel the good Effects of those Duties in our Natures, how fast our Lusts do *decline*, our Dispositions *mend*, and all our Graces *improve* in the Use of them, the Sense of this will mightily *indear* and *ingratiate* them to us. Just as it is with a *Scholar*, when he first *enters* upon the Methods of *Learning*, they are very *tedious* and *irksom* to him; the Pains of *reading*, *observing*, and *recollecting*, the *Confinement* to a Study, and the *racking* his Brains with severe *Reasoning* and *Discourse*,
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are things that he cannot easily away with, till he hath been *inured* and *accustomed* to them a while, and then they grow more *natural* and *easy* to him; but when he comes to be sensible of the great *Advantages* he reaps by his Labour, how it *raises* and *improves* his Understanding, *inlarges* its Prospect and *furnishes* its Conception with *brave* and *useful* Notions; then do his Labours which were formerly so *grievous*, become not only *easy*, but *delectable* to him. And even so it is with these *spiritual* Exercises of Religion, which to *unexperienced* Persons that are yet but newly entered upon them will be very *painful* and *troublesom*; but if they have but *Patience* and *Courage* to hold on, Custom will quickly render them more *tolerable*, and when they have practised them so long as to find and perceive the blessed Effects of them, how much they have contributed to the *reforming* their Tempers, *reducing* their Inclinations, *filig* and *polishing* their rough and mis-shapen Natures; with what *amiable* Graces, *divine* and *godlike* Dispositions they have *adorned* and *beautified* them; their Sense and Feeling of *this* will convert them all into *delightful* Recreations, Thus as the Custom of them will render them *easy*, so the blessed Fruits of them will make them *delectable*; the former will render them *facil* as Nature, the latter *eligible* as Reward. And if so, why should we be discouraged, faint-hearted Creatures that we are, at those little *present* Difficulties, which our Diligence will soon *wear off* and convert into *Ease* and *Pleasure*?

VII. Consider that with the *Difficulty* of them, there is a world of present *Peace* and

Satisfaction intermingled. If you *fall back* again to your old Lusts, instead of these *present* Difficulties you *start* at. you must expect to have the *Trouble* of a guilty Soul to contend with; which, if you have any Sense of God, and of Good and Evil, will be much more *grievous* to you than they. But if you *go on*, you will carry with you a *quiet* and a *satisfied* Mind, a Conscience that will entertain you all along with such *sweet* and *calm* Reflections as will abundantly *compensate* you for all the Hardships and Difficulties you encounter on the way; that with innumerable Iterations will be always *resounding* to your *honest* Endeavours those *best* and *sweetest* Echoes, *Well done good and profitable Servant*, 'how *bravely* hast thou acquitted thy self, how *manfully* hast thou stood to thy Duty against all Oppositions, and with what a *gallant* Resolution hast thou *repulsed* those Temptations that bore up against thee? Now for a Man to have his own Mind continually *applauding* him, and *crowning* his Actions with the Approbations of his Conscience, is Encouragement enough to *balance* a thousand Difficulties; and the Sense that he hath done his Duty, and that the God *above*, and the Vice-god *within* him, are both *satisfied* and *pleased* with him, will give him such a *grateful* Relish of each Action of his Warfare, that the *Difficulty* will only serve to enhance the *Pleasure* of it.

And as he will have great *Peace* and *Satisfaction* whilst he is *contending* with these Difficulties, so when he hath so far *conquered* them as that they are no longer able to *curb* and *with-hold* him from the *free* and *vigorous* Exercise of the heavenly Virtues,

Virtues, but in despite of them he can easily moderate his Passions and Appetites by the Laws of his Reason, and freely love, adore, and imitate, submit to, and confide in the ever-blessed God, and chearfully exert an unforced Plainness and Simplicity, Good-will and Charity, Submission and Condescension, Peace and Concord towards all Men; when, I say, he hath so far surmounted the Difficulties of his Warfare, as that with any Measure of Freedom and Vigour he can put forth all these heavenly Virtues, he will find himself not only in a quiet, but in a heavenly Condition. For these heavenly Graces are the *Palate* by which the immortal Mind tastes and relishes its Heaven, the blessed *Organs* and *Sensories* by which it feels and perceives the Joys of the World to come, and without which it can no more relish and enjoy them, than the senseless Hive can the Sweetness of the Honey that is in it. And consequently the more quick and vivacious these heavenly Organs of the Mind are, and the more they are disburthened of those carnal and devilish Lusts that blunt their Sense and Perception, the more accurately they will taste the Joys and Pleasures of Heaven. So that when by the constant Practice of the war-faring Duties of Religion, we have conquered those bad Inclinations of our Natures, which render the heavenly Virtues so difficult to us, and do so clog and incumber us in the Exercise of them, we shall find ourselves in a Heaven upon Earth, and each Act of Virtue will be a Presentation and Fore-taste of the Joys of the celestial Life. And being arrived at this blessed State in which all heavenly Virtue is so connaturalized to us, the sweet

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Experience we shall have of the *unspeakable* Joys and Pleasures it abounds with, will cause us to look back with wondrous *Content* and *Satisfaction* upon all those Difficulties we *contended* with in our Way to it, and bless those *Prayers* and *Tears*, and *Strivings* with ourselves, those tedious *Watchings* and *Self-examinations*, &c. by which we have now at last *conquered* and *subdued* them.

Wherefore since the Practice of these our *warfaring* Duties hath so much *present* Peace going along with it, and since by its natural Drift and Tendency it is leading us *forward* to a State of so much *Pleasure* and *Satisfaction*. what a Madness is it, for a Man to be beaten off from it, by those present *little* Difficulties that attend it! What Man that consults his own Interest would ever desist from the prosecuting such a *gainful* Warfare, in which to make him amends for the present Pains it puts him to, he is not only possess'd of *Peace* of Conscience for the *present*, but assured of a happy Life for the *future* when he hath *conquered* the Difficulties he *contends* with.

VIII. Consider that the *Difficulty* of these Duties is abundantly *compensated* by the *Reward* of them. A generous Mind will think no *Means* too hard which tend to noble and worthy *Ends*; in the Prosecution of which, *Opposition* only whets its *Courage* and *Resolution*. So that doubtless had we any Spark of Generosity in us, the Vastness and Excellency of the *End* we pursue, would make us despise all Difficulties in the *Way* to it. What a *Meanness* of *Spirit* therefore doth it argue
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in us to stand *bogling*, as we do, at the Difficulties of Religion ; to think much of spending a few *Days* or *Years* in this World in *striving* and *contending* with our Inclinations, in *Consideration* and *Watchfulness*, in earnest *Prayer* and severe *Reflection* on ourselves, when we are assured before-hand that at the *Conclusion* of this short *Conflict* we shall be carried off by Angels in Triumph to Heaven ; and there receive from the Captain of our Salvation a Crown of everlasting Joys and Pleasures ; when after a few *Moments* Pains and Labour, we shall live *Millions* of *Millions* of most happy Ages in the ravishing Fruition of a boundless Good, and after these are expired have as many Millions of Millions more to live. What an unconscionable thing is it for us to complain of any *1 difficulty*, who have such a vast Recompence of Reward in our *View* ? In the name of God, Sirs, what would you have ? Why we would have Heaven drop down into our Mouths, and not put us to all this Trouble of *reaching* and *climbing* after it. Would you so ? it is a very *modest* Desire indeed ; that is, you would have the God of Heaven *thrust* his Favours upon you while you *scorn* and *despise* them, and prostitute his Heaven to a company of *Drones* that do not think it worth their while to go out of their Hives to gather it. O ! for shame look once more upon *Heaven*, and consider again what it is to dwell in the Paradise of the World with God and Angels and Saints, and in their blessed Company to live out an Eternity in the most rapturous *Contemplations* and *Loves* and *Joys* ; to *bathe* our dilated Faculties in an overflowing *River* of Pleasures,
and.

and in perfect *Ease*, *Health* and *Vigour* of Mind to feed upon a Happiness that is as *large* as our Capacities, and as *lasting* as our Beings. Is this a Reward of that *inconsiderable* Nature, that we should think much to *labour* and *contend* for it? Is not the Hope of being *satisfied for ever*, a sufficient Encouragement to induce us to *deny* our Lusts and Appetites a *few Moments*, or is there not good enough in an everlasting *Rest*, to countervail a few Days and Years *Labour* and *Contention*? What though you *pant* and *labour* now while you are *climbing* the everlasting Hills, God be praised it is not so far to the Top but that the pleasant *Gales* and glorious *Prospects* you shall everlastingly enjoy there, will so abundantly *compensate* for the Difficulty of the *Ascent*, as that instead of *complaining* of it, you will to eternal Ages reflect upon it with *Pleasure* and *Delight*. Wherefore when your Courage begins to *shrink* at the Difficulty of your Warfare, do but lift up your Eyes to the Remembrance of *Reward*, and to be sure, if you have any Heart, that will inspire you with such a brave Resolution, as nothing will be too *hard* for but what is absolutely *impossible*. For how can we be *disheartened* at any *superable* Difficulty, so long as we are *animated* with this Persuasion, that if we have our *Fruit unto Holiness*, *our end shall be everlasting Life*?

S E C T. III.

Concerning those Duties which appertain to the Perfection and Consummation of our Christian Warfare, shewing what they are, and how effectually they conduce to the perfecting us in the Virtues of the Heavenly Life.

I Proceed now to the third and last Part of our Christian Warfare, viz. the *Consummation* of it, which is *final Perservance*. For after we have *actually* ingaged, and made some *Progress* in it, our next Care and Duty is, that we do not *relapse* and basely *retreat* from what we have so *prosperously* undertaken, and hitherto so *effectually* prosecuted, but that so long as we live we *persist* in an open *Defiance* to our Sins, and endeavour to *pursue* and *mortifie* our Inclinations to them, and *persevere* in the Practice of all Virtue; still endeavouring thereby to *improve* and *grow on* to Perfection, that so we may *die* as we have hitherto *lived*, and *consummate* our Warfare in a *final* Victory, and that when our Lord shall come or send his Herald, Death, to summon us off from the *Field*, we may be found *fighting* under his Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and finally *die* as we have *lived*, his faithful *Soldiers* and *Followers*. For this he indispensably exacts of us, viz. *that we should be faithful unto Death*, Rev. ii. 10. *that we should patiently continue in well-doing*, Rom. ii. 7. *that we should endure to the end* Matt. x. 22. *and hold the beginning of our Confidence stedfast to the end*, Heb. iii. 14. *that we should*

shall keep his Works to the end, and finally overcome as well as fight, Rev. ii, 26. In a word, *that having set our hands to the Plough, we should not look back*, Luk. ix. 62. but that we should be always *abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

1 Cor. xv. 58. The Sense of all which is, that we should not only *begin* this our Christian Warfare, and *prosecute* it for a *while*, but that we should *proceed* and *persevere* in it as long as we breathe and never lay down our *Arms* till we lay down our *Lives*. In order to which, as we must still *persevere* in the Practice of those Duties which appertain to the *Course* and *Progress* of our Warfare. so there are sundry other Duties which we must practise, and which have a more *direct* and *immediate* Influence upon the final *Success* and *Consummation* of it. All which I shall reduce to these following Particulars :

1. That while we *stand*, we should not be over *confident* of ourselves, but still keep a *jealous* Eye upon the *Weakness* and *Inconstancy* of our own Natures.

2. That if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miscarry*, we should immediately *arise* again by Repentance.

3. That to *prevent* the like Falls and Miscarriages for the *future*, we should endeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more especially from *those* which were the *Occasions* of our Fall.

4. That we should more *curiously* search into the *smaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature, in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them.

5. That,

5. That, so far as *lawfully* we can, we should live in close *Communion* with the *Church* whereof we are Members.

6. That we should not out of a *fond* Opinion that we are good *enough* already, *stint* our Progress in Religion to any determinate *Degree* or *Measure* of Goodness.

7. That we should *frequently* entertain ourselves with the Prospect of our *Mortality*, and endeavour to *compose* ourselves before-hand into a good *Posture* of dying.

8. That in order thereunto, we should be wondrous *careful* to *discharge* our Consciences' of all the *Reliques* and *Remains* of our past *Guilt*.

9. That to *compensate* for these, so far as we are able, we should take care to *redeem* the Time we have formerly spent in *sinful* Courses, by being *doubly* diligent in the Exercise of all the contrary *Virtues*, and the doing all the contrary *Good* we are able.

10. That we should labour after a *rational* and *well-grounded Assurance* of Heaven.

I. To the *Perfection* and *Consummation* of our Christian Warfare it is necessary that while we *stand* we should not be over *confident* of ourselves, but still keep a *jealous* Eye upon the *Weakness* and *Inconstancy* of our own Natures. For thus the Apostle declares it to be the Will of God, that *we should not trust in ourselves*, i. e. *rely* too much upon our own *Strength* and *Ability*, 2 Cor. i. 9. and elsewhere he admonishes, *let him that thinks he stands* (or, the *present* being put for the *future*, as it is very frequently, *let him that thinks he shall stand*) *take heed lest he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12. so also

Rom xi.

Rom. xi. 20. *Thou standest by Faith, be not high-minded but fear, i. e.* it is thy *Faith* that upholds thee, but be not too *secure* of thy *Support*, lest thou also *fall* and *perish*, as thy Brethren the Jews have done before thee. And hence we are bid to *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. *i. e.* with a holy *Solicitude* and *Jealousie*, lest one time or other we should be *tempted* and *overcome*, and at the last finally *miscarry*. And indeed there is nothing doth more expose Men to the Hazard of *falling* than too much *Confidence* in their own *Strength*. This makes them venture upon a thousand *Temptations* which they might have *fairly*, and much more *prudently* avoided; and hurries them hand over head into such inviting *Occasions* and *Opportunities* of sinning, as do too often *inveigle* and *betray* them in despite of all their good Resolutions to the contrary. Whereas had they but *suspected* themselves, and not *presumed* too much upon their own Stedfastness, they would many a time have kept out of *harm's-way*, and *avoided* the Snares that did *intangle* them; but by venturing, like *Sampson*, to lay down their Heads in a *Delilah's* Lap, in *Confidence* of the Strength of their own Resolution, they have been insensibly *inticed*, after some coy Refusals, to *betray* themselves into the Snare of the Devil.

And as through our over-weening *Confidence* of our own Strength we *expose* ourselves to many needless *Temptations*, so we do also too often provoke God to *withdraw* his Grace and Assistance from us, and to leave us to contend *alone* with those *Temptations* whereunto we do so
confident-

confidently expose ourselves. For as he is always ready to *assist* us, so he always expects that we should acknowledge our *Need* of, and *Dependance* upon him, and not presume too much upon our own Strength, which without his gracious *Concurrence*, is *Weakness* and *Impotence*. When therefore without God's *Call* and *Warrant* we will needs *rush* into Temptations in Confidence of our own *Ability* to resist and conquer them, he many times leaves us without his *Aid* and *Assistance*, that so he may chastise our *Presumption* by permitting us to be *defeated*, and convince us by the woful Experiment of our *Fall*, how *unable* we are to stand without his Aid and Support. It is our daily Prayer that God would *not lead us into Temptation*; but if for our Trial he thinks meet to do so, we have all Assurance that if we be not wanting to ourselves, *he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* 1. Cor. x. 13. But if we will lead *ourselves* into Temptation, in Confidence of our own Ability to *contend* with, and *break* through it, God is so far from being obliged to *second* us in our *Folly* and unwarrantable *Rashness*, that he is justly *provoked* by it to *abandon* us to ourselves, and, as a certain Consequence of that, to permit us to be *vanquish'd* and *led captive*. Wherefore as we hope to persevere to the *End*, and to bring our Warfare to a happy *Conclusion*, it is highly necessary that we should always keep a *jealous Eye* upon ourselves, and not *confide* too much in our own Strength and Ability.

II. To our *final* Perseverance in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that if at any time we wilfully *fall* and *miscarry* in it, we should *immediately arise* again by Repentance. For what is forbidden us as to *one Sin*, equally extends to *all*, *let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath*, Eph. iv. 26. that is, if you have *wilfully* given the Reins to your Wrath, suffer it not to break forth into *contumelious* Behaviour, but repent of it *immediately*, before the Sun sets; according to that old Practice of the *Pythagoreans* mentioned by *Plutarch*, who when at any time they fell into *reproachful* Language out of Anger, Ταὺς δεξίας ἐμβάλλοντες ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἀσπαζόμενοι πρὶν ἢ τὸν ἥλιον δύναι διελύοντο. i. e. before ever the Sun set they always took care to be *reconciled*, and constantly *shook hands* with, and *embraced* one another; and the reason of the Prohibition, which you have in the next verse, *viz*, *neither give Place to the Devil*, that is by suffering your *Wrath* to grow into inveterate *Malice*, equally extends to all *other* Sins, which if they be not *immediately* rooted out by Repentance, will quickly *improve* into Habits. So that we have as much reason to repent of our *Lust* before the Sun *rises* on it, and of our *Fraud* and *Oppression* before it hath *run its course* on it, as of our *Wrath* before it goes down upon it. And consequently, by a parity of Reason, the Prohibition must extend to all *other* Sins as well as *this*, and oblige us, whenever we have *wilfully* sinned in any Particular, to *revoke* and *expiate* it by an *immediate* Act of Repentance.

For he that hath *sinned* wilfully and not *repented* of it, doth all the while continue an obstinate
Rebel

Rebel against God, and is so far from *persevering* in the *Christian Warfare*, that he is actually listed a *Voluntier* in the *adverse Party*. And if after we have thus sinned, Death should *interpose* between us and our Repentance, (as who knows but it may if we repent not *immediately*) we shall be so far from *consummating* our *Christian Warfare* in *Victory*, that we should die *Vassals* to the Devil. But then as by sinning *wilfully* we do *desert* God, so by continuing *impenitent* under it will still run *farther* and *farther* from him, and thereby make so *wide* a Gap and Interruption in our religious Progress, as will not be easily *repaired* again; and whereas had we *repented* and *come back* without *Delay* as soon as we had *strayed* from our Duty, we might soon have *recovered* the Ground we had lost by it, and by a little more Diligence have gotten as far *onward* as if we had never interrupted our Progress at all; by *deferring* our Repentance we set ourselves farther and farther *back*, and shall every Day be more and more *indisposed* to return. For in the Course of our Religion there is no *standing still*, but either we are *progressive* or *retrograde*, going *backward* or *forward* as long as we live; so that when once we are *out* of our Way, we are still going *farther* out, till such time as we *return* again; and consequently the *longer* we are out, the *harder* it will be to return, and the *farther* we shall have to the end of our Way. For when I *first* sin, and the Wound of my Innocence is yet *green* and *fresh*, it may easily be cured by the timely Application of a sorrowful *Confession* and new *Resolution* of Amendment; but if I neglect it, it will rot and *putrefy*; my *Sense* of it will be

hardened, and my *Inclination* to it grow every day more *inveterate*, and then if it be not *lanced* and *corroded* by a *sharp*, a *long* and a *painful* Repentance, it will turn into an incurable *Gangrene*. Hence the Apostle bids us *exhort one another daily while it is called to day*, that is, to *repent* while it is called to day, *lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin*, Heb. iii, 13. So that when we have *wilfully* sinned, we run a mighty Hazard of our *final* Perseverance, if we don't repent *immediately*. For all the while we *delay*, our Conscience grows more *seared*, and our Lust grows more *confirmed*, and God knows where it will end, but it is fearfully to be *suspected* that *that* neglected Bruise which we got by our Fall, will grow *worse* and *worse*, and *determine* at last in final *Impenitency*. Wherefore as we intend to *persevere* in well-doing, it concerns us in the *first* place to take all possible Care not to give way to any *wilful* Sin, nor suffer ourselves by any Hopes or Fears to be tempted from our good *Resolution*; but if at any time our wicked Inclinations should prevail against it, to betake ourselves *immediately* to a serious Repentance, to make a sorrowful *Confession* of it to our offended God, and solemnly renew our *Resolution* against it, that so we may stop the growing Evil *betime*, before it is capable of endangering our *final* Apostasy.

III. To our final *Perseverance*, it is necessary to *prevent* the like Falls and Miscarriages for the *future*, we should endeavour to *withdraw* our Affections from the Temptations of the World, but more especially from *those* Temptations which were the *Occasions* of our Fall. For thus we are
strictly

strictly prohibited *to set our Affections upon things on the Earth*, Col. iii. 21. *to love the World and the things that are in the World*, 1 John ii. 15. *to lay up for ourselves Treasures upon Earth*, Matt. vi. 19. and it is the proper Character of a true Christian *to be crucified to the World*, Gal. iv. 14. and *to converse as a Stranger and Pilgrim in it*, Heb. ix. 13. As on the contrary, *to mind earthly Things, and to be Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God*, are made the proper Characters of Infidels and Apostates, Phil. iii. 19. compared with 2 Tim. ii. 4. And so inconsistent is an inordinate Affection to the World with our *Perseverance* in the Christian Warfare, that St. James expressly tells us, *that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God*, Ja. iv. 4. and it is to the Excess of our Friendship to it that the Scripture frequently attributes our Apostasy, 2 Tim. iv. 10. and the Apostle tells us, *that they that will be rich, that is, immoderately covet to be so, fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Perdition and Destruction; and that the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil*, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. From all which it's apparent, how necessary it is, in the accounts of Christianity, in order to our *Perseverance*, that we should endeavour to *wean and abstract* ourselves from the World.

For this World is the *Magazine* of all those Temptations by which our Virtue and Innocence are *importuned and assaulted*; and it is either the *Hope* of some worldly *Pleasure, Profit or Honour* that *allures*, or the *Fear* of some of the contrary Evils which are incident to us in the Course of Religion that *affrights* us from our Duty. Whilst

therefore we *immoderately* love those Goods and Evils which are the *Sollicitors* of Vice, we are in very great Danger of being *conquered* and *led captive* by it. For it is not for the sake of *sinning* that Men sin, but for the sake of those *Goods*, or to avoid those *Evils* which are appendant to their *sinning* or *not sinning*; and consequently the more a Man *loves* those *Goods* which cling and adhere to a sinful Action, the more propense he will be to the Commission of it; and the more he *dreads* those *Evils* which he can most easily avoid by a sinful Action, the more prone and inclinable he will be to it. Wherefore to secure our *Perseverance* in this Warfare against Sin, it is absolutely necessary that we *rectify* our *Opinion* of the Goods and Evils of this World, and *moderate* and *abate* our *Affection* towards them, especially towards those that have been most *prevalent* with us. For the Temptation that prevails upon us *discovers* the *weak* side of our Nature, and *instructs* the Devil what Good or Evil it is that is most apt to *allure* or *affright* us; and to be sure that *subtil* Tempter who hath been so many thousand Years *studying* the Art of *seducing* us, will not fail to assault us *again* where he hath been already *successful*; and therefore it concerns us to *fortify* ourselves there, where we have so much reason to expect the Enemy will *assault* us, and to *rectify* our *Opinions* of, and *mortify* our Affections to those things which have already so much *imposed* upon our Virtue and Innocence. For it is our *Imagination* that gives *Life* and *Efficacy* to the *Charms* and *Terrors* of the World, and renders them so successful against us; we *fancy* that to be in them
which

which is not, and so are *affected* not so much with the things *themselves*, as with the false *Representations* we make of them.

For it is plain the Goods of the World are beholden to *ourselves* for the greatest Part of those *Beauties* with which they *tempt* and *allure* us; and it is our *Fancy* that gives the *Paint* and *Fucus* with which they *charm* and *enamour* our Affections, and so for the *Evils* of the World, it is our own *Imagination* that *disguises* them into such *Bugs* and *Scare-crows*, and puts those ghastly *Vizors* on them with which they *fright* and *amaze* us. If therefore we would but take care to *rectify* our *Opinions* of them both, and to strip them out of their *imaginary* Terrors and Allurements, we should thereby *disarm* them of their main Strength, and render them much less able to seduce us for the *future*. And this methinks we might easily do, if we would but fairly represent to ourselves the present *State* and *Posture* of our Affairs. For we are a sort of Beings, that are every Moment travelling from *hence* to an *eternal* World, where an *inexpressible* Happiness or Misery attends us; and all that we *enjoy* or *suffer* in this Life, is only the *Convenience* or *Inconvenience* of a *short* Journey to a *long* Home, but can have no other Influence upon our *everlasting* Condition, than as it is the occasion either of our *Virtue* or *Vice*, which are the only *Goods* and *Evils* that will accompany us to Eternity, and make us *happy* or *miserable* there for ever. But as for *Poverty* or *Riches*, *Pain* or *Pleasure*, *Disgrace* or *Reputation*, they are things which probably within these ten or twenty Years will be as perfectly *in.different* to us as our last Night's *Dream*

was when we awoke in the Morning. And this, methinks duly *considered*, were enough to render us very *unconcerned* at any *Good* or *Evil* that can happen to us here. For what a mighty Matter is it whether I fare *well* or *ill* for twenty or thirty Years, who when that is expired must be *happy* or *miserable* for Millions of Millions of Ages; and what will these *little* Goods or Evils signify to me, when my *Body* is in the Grave, and my *Soul* in Eternity? When I am *stript* into a naked Spirit, and set *ashore* upon the invisible World; then all these things will be as if they never *were*, and in the twinkling of an Eye I shall *lose* Sight of them for ever; and of all that I *enjoyed* or *suffered* in this Life I shall have nothing remaining but my *Virtue* or *Vice*, whose Issues will prove my eternal *Happiness* or *Misery*. Doubtless, would we but accustom our Minds to such Reflections as these, they would effectually *restrain* us from the immoderate *Love* or *Fear* of the things of this World, and reduce us to a *constant* and *efficacious* Persuasion, that there is no *Good* in this World *comparable* to that of doing our *Duty*, nor any *Evil* incident to us in this Life. that it is not infinitely less *formidable* than *Sin*. And when once our *Affection* to this World, and our *Opinion* of the Goods and Evils of it, are thus *moderated* and *rectified*, the Temptations to Sin will quite *lose* their *bold* of us; and be no more able to *fasten* upon our Resolution. So that now we may pass safely through them whilst they are *sparkling* about us, there being no *Tinder* in our Breasts for them to *catch fire* and *kindle* upon. Now they will be no longer capable to *allure* or *affright* us, those bosom

Orators

Orators being *silenced* that were wont to *contend* for them, and to *magnify* their *Charms* and *Terrors*; and when we neither immoderately *love* nor *fear* them, it will be no hard Matter to *defend* our *Virtue* and *Innocence* against all their *Assaults* and *Importunities*.

IV. To our *final* Perseverance, it is necessary that we should more *curiously* search into the *smaller* Defects and Indecencies of our Nature in order to our *reforming* and *correcting* them. Hence we are commanded to *hate even the Garments spotted by the Flesh*, Jude 23. *i. e.* to take care of the *Beginnings* of Sin, of any thing that hath the least *Spot* or *Infection* of it; and accordingly we are obliged not only to take care to *rub out* the greater *Stains* of our Nature, but to *be diligent that we may be found of our Lord in peace without Spot and blameless*, 2 Pet. iii. 14. *i. e.* to endeavour to reform those *smaller* and more *indiscernable* Defects of our Nature, which though they do not totally *stain*, yet very much *spot* and *blemish* it; that so at the coming of our Lord we may be found not only *sincere* and *upright*, but, as near as may be, *innocent* and *blameless*. For so, Phil. ii. 15. we are bid to be *blameless, harmless, and without Rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation: i. e.* to endeavour so to demean ourselves in this World, as that we may appear not only honest for the *main*, but, so near as is possible, *spotless* and *unreprovable*. And indeed there is nothing doth more frequently occasion Mens *final* Miscarriage in Religion than their not being *careful* and *diligent* in this matter. When they first enter into the Christian Warfare, they very industriously set them-

themselves against that Course of wilful Sin in which they formerly lived, and this were wondrous well, if they did not *stop* here, and go on *farther*, but alas, in the mean time, while they are thus industriously busied in subduing their *old* Sins, there are a great many lesser *Flaws* and *Defects* in their Nature, which by *timely* Care and Inspection they might easily correct; but these they take no Notice of, but quietly permit them to *grow* and *increase*, till at last they become as *hurtful* and *dangerous* to them as their old Sins were, against which they have all this while so zealously contended. As for Instance, when they first entered upon a Resolution of Amendment, they were *prophane* it may be, or *sensual*, or vehemently addicted to *Fraud* and *Oppression*; and against these they opposed themselves with great *Zeal* and *Animosity*; and so far they did *well*, but in the mean time perhaps there was *Pride* and *Ostentation*, *Envy* and *Peevishness*, *Self-will* and *Censoriousness*, secretly *budding* and *sprouting* up in their Natures, all which they might have easily cured by *timely* Applications; but alas! in the heat of their Contest against their *other* Sins, they never so much as minded or regarded *these*, but e'en left them alone till they *grew* up into obstinate and inveterate Habits, and became every whit as *fatal* and *destructive* to their Souls as *those* were which they have been all this while *subduing* and *mortifying*. So that after all they have only *changed* their Sins, and have been *conjuring up* one Devil while they have been *laying* another; and while the Tide of their Wickedness hath been *ebbing* on this Shore, it hath been *flowing* on the contrary, and

as it hath *sunk* in *Sensuality*, it hath *swelled* into Devilishness. Perhaps whilst you are zealously carrying on your Warfare against your old Sins, you may find your selves too apt to be *tickled* with Applause, and *puffed* with vain Ostentation; have a Care now, that while you are *starving* one Vice you do not *pamper* another. For if you do not correct this *little* Irregularity of your Nature *betimes*, it will soon be as *dangerous* and *mischievous* to you, as ever any of those Vices were against which you are contending; it will by degrees so *insinuate* into your good Intentions, and so *sophisticate* the Purity of them, that at last you will *intend* nothing else but *Applause*; and so your whole Religion will be converted into dead *Shew* and empty *Pageantry*, and your spiritual Warfare will prove only a Passage out of *Profaneness* into *Hypocrisy*. It may be whilst you are contending against those *fleshly* Inclinations by which you have formerly been captivated, your Hearts will begin to *swell* with an *over-weaning* Conceit of your own Virtue and Godliness, and as a Consequence of that, to entertain *contemptuous* and *censorious* Thoughts of your Brethren; beware now, that whilst you *struggling* with your old fleshly Lusts, you do not *overlook* these little *Defects* and *Indecencies* of your Nature; lest while you are conquering *one* sort of Sins, you be captivated by *another*. For if you do not take care to *nip* them in their *Buds*, and to *check* these little *Essays* and *Beginnings* of them, they will soon *spring up* into Habits of *Pride* and *Insolence*, *Rancour* and *Uncharitableness*, and so your Warfare against Sin will be only a *Transition* from *one* Evil into *another*,
from

from the Pollutions of the *Flesh* into the Pollutions of the *Spirit*, and from the Nature of *Beasts* into the Nature of *Devils*. Wherefore if you would be *finally* successful in the Christian Warfare, you must take great Care that while you are contending with the *grosser* and more *inveterate* Vices of your Nature, you do not neglect its *lesser* Defects and Irregularities; for whilst they are *lesser* they may be *easily* corrected, but if they are not, they will soon grow *greater*, and in the End prove as *dangerous* as those you are now contending with. For every Vice is *small* in the Beginning, and *easy* to be cured, but if it be *neglected*, like a Scratch in the *Flesh*, it will *corrupt* and *rankle* into a spreading *Gangrene*.

V. To our *Perseverance* to the End in this our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that, so far as *lawfully* we can, we should live in close *Communion* with the *Church* whereof we are Members. 'Tis true, a particular Church may be so *corrupted* as that its Members may be obliged to *disunite* themselves from it. For every Man is obliged by Virtue of his being in *any* Society, not to agree to any thing which tends to the apparent *Ruin* of it. Now the main End of *Christian* Society being the *Honour* of *God*, and the *Salvation* of *Souls*, every Man that enters into it is thereby obliged in his own Station to *advance* this End; and consequently, as to *join* in all Acts of the Christian Society he is *united* to, so far as they *tend* thereunto, so to *refuse* all *such* Acts of that Society if *any* *such* should be enjoined, as do apparently *oppose*, and are directly *repugnant* to it. So that if any Act that is apparently *sinful*, be enjoined
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by the particular Church whereof I am a Member, as a necessary Condition of my *Communion* with her, I am bound to *abstain* from it, for the sake of the *general* End of Christian Society. As for Instance, suppose the *Church* whereof I am a *Member*, require it as a Condition of my Communion, that I should transgress any *just* Law of the *Commonwealth* whereof I am a *Subject*; in this Case I am bound rather to *desert* that Church's Communion than live in wilful *Disobedience* to the Civil Authority. And this is the Case of those Men, who though they live in a Christian Commonwealth, have been *baptized* into, and *bred up* in the Communion of *particular* Congregations that, contrary to Law, have *separated* themselves from the *Establisht*, *National* Church; for if in this *National* Church there be nothing imposed on them by the Laws of the *Commonwealth* that is apparently contradictory to the Laws of *Christ*, they are bound in Conscience to *desert* those *separate* Congregations (allowing them to be *true* Churches) and to *join* themselves with the Church *National*; and if they do not, they are wilful Offenders against the Law of Christ, which requires us to obey all Human Ordinances *for the Lord's sake*. And again, supposing *one* National Church to be subject to *another*, that which is *subject* is bound to refuse the Communion of that which is *superior*, if it cannot enjoy it without complying with Impositions that are apparently *sinful*. Which is evidently the Case between *us* and the *Church of Rome*, supposing that *de jure* we were once her *Subjects* and *Members*; for had we been so, we should doubtless
never

never have *separated* ourselves from her, could we but have *separated* her *Sins* from her *Communion*; could we have *profest* her *Creed* without *implicitly* believing all her *Cheats* and *Impostures*, or submitted ourselves to her *Guides* without apparent *Danger* of being *misled* by them into the *Pit* of *Destruction*, or joined with her *publick Services* without *worshipping* of *Creatures*, or received her *Sacraments* without practising the grossest *Superstitions* and *Idolatries*. But when she had made it necessary for us either to *sin with*, or *separate from* her, we could have no other *honest* Remedy but only to *withdraw*; and if in this our *Separation* there had been a sinful *Schism* on either side, we could have appealed to *Heaven* and *Earth* whose the *Guilt* of it was, *theirs* that forced us upon it, or *ours* that were forced to it. But yet the *Case* of *our* *Separation* from the *Church of Rome*, is vastly different from that of the *Separation* of *private* Members from their own *particular* Churches. For we affirm that the *Church of Rome* is but a *particular* Church, whose *Authority* extends no farther than to its own *native* Members, and consequently hath no more *Power* to impose *Laws* of *Communion* upon *us*, than *we* have upon *her*; our *particular* Church being altogether as *distinct* and *independant* from *her*, as *she* is from *ours*. So that though the *Terms* of *Communion* she imposes upon her own Members, were all of them *lawful* and *innocent*, yet do they no more *oblige* us as we are *Christians* of the *Church of England*, than the *lawful* *Commands* of the *Great Mogul* do, as we are *Subjects* of the *Kingdom of England*.

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But the Case of *private* Members, whether of *ours*, or any *other* particular Church, is vastly different. For if we will allow *particular* Churches to be so many *formed Societies* of Christians; (as we must do, or else degrade them into so many *confused Multitudes*) we must necessarily allow them to have a just *Authority* (even as all *other* formed Societies have) over their own Members. And that they have so, is evident not only from the Nature of the thing, but also from *Scripture*, where the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of particular Churches are said to be constituted by the Holy Ghost *Overseers* of their particular Flocks, *Acts* xx. 28. which word both in *sacred* and *prophane* Writ denotes a *ruling* Power. And accordingly these Overseers are elsewhere called *ruling-Elders*, *1 Tim.* v. 17. and the Subjects and Members of their Churches are required *to obey them, as those that have the Rule over them*, *Heb.* xiii. 17. and elsewhere the Apostle exhorts them to *know, i. e. submissively to own* the Authority of those that were *over them in the Lord*, *1 Thes.* v. 12. By all which it is evident, that the Members of *particular* Churches are by *divine Institution* subjected to the *Authority* of their *spiritual Governors*, and obliged in *all things* to *obey* them, wherein they are not *countermanded* by Christ himself. So that though *one* particular Church may *refuse* the Impositions of *another*, and that not only as they are *sinful*, but as they are *Impositions*, because the other hath no *lawful Authority* over it; yet is it by no means *lawful* for the Subject of any *particular* Church to *disobey* their Church-Governors in any *lawful* matter, because being *subjected* to their *Authority* by

by Christ the supreme Head of the *Church Catholick*, they are obliged to submit to them as to his *Substitutes* and *Vicegerents* in every thing which he hath not *antecedently* prohibited. And if rather than do so, they shall chuse to *revolt* from the Communion of their Church, they are *Schismatics*, or, which is the same thing, they are *Rebels* to Christ's Authority in that particular Church they revolt from. For what *Faction* is in the *State*, that is *Schism* in the *Church*, viz. an *unjust* Opposition to Authority; the one to Christ's *Civil* Authority derived upon our *Magistrates*, the other to his *spiritual* Authority derived upon our *Bishops* and *Ecclesiastical* Governors.

It is true in some Cases, as I hinted before, *withdrawing* from the Communion of a Church may be so far from being a *Rebellion* against Christ, that it may be an act of *Duty* and *Obedience* to him. For where Christ who is my *supreme* Lord; and my *Ecclesiastical* Governors who are in Authority *under* him, command things that are directly *inconsistent*, I am doubtless bound to obey *him* rather than *them*; yea, though their Commands are not inconsistent in *themselves*, yet if I am *fully persuaded* they are, it is all one to *me*. For when I do what I *falsly* believe Christ hath forbidden, I am in *Will* as much a *Rebel* against his Authority, as when I do what I *truly* believe he hath forbidden. And so by *not complying* with my spiritual Governors out of an *innocent Misperuasion* that what they command is *unlawful*, I do *formally* and in *Will* as much obey Christ in so doing, as if it were *really unlawful*. So that in short, when the Governors of the Church, whereof I am a Member,
do

do impose as the Conditions of my Communion, things that are either unlawful in themselves, or that, after due Examination, I verily believe are unlawful, I am bound in Obedience to the Authority of Christ, rather to *desert* that Communion, than to *comply* with the Terms and Conditions of it.

But since to *desert* the Communion of a Church is a matter of *vast* Moment, (as I shall prove by and by) is ought not to be done without the greatest *Caution* and *Tenderness*. For he that rejects *sinful Terms* of Communion without *just* Enquiry and *sufficient* Examination, is formally as much a *Schismatick*, *i. e.* he is as much a Rebel in *Will* to Christ's spiritual Authority in his Church *Delegates* and *Vicegerents*, as he that *rashly* rejects *innocent* and *lawful ones*. For had it been only the *Sinfulness* of the Condition that displeased him, he would have made Conscience before he presumed to *reject* it, *duly* to inform himself whether it were *sinful* or *no*; but by thus rejecting it *at a venture*, without a *due* Enquiry into the Nature of it, he plainly shews that it was not so much the *Sin* that displeased him, as the *Authority* that imposed it; and that it was not his *Conscience* that took offence at it, but his *Humour*; and consequently, that he would have had the same *Dislike* of it, though it had been *lawful* and *innocent*. For *Conscience* being an Act of the *Judgment* and Reason, cannot be offended without *Reason* either *real* or *apparent*; and without making a *due* Enquiry into the Nature of the thing we are offended at, we can have no *Reason* that will either *warrant* or *excuse* our Offence.

Now to a *due* Enquiry, it is necessary that we should *impartially* examine *both sides* of the Question; and that while we are doing so, we should keep *both* our Ears open to the Matter in Debate, and *equally* attend to what can be said *for*, as well as to what can be said *against* it; and then that upon a full hearing of *both*, we should determine, as near as we can, on which side the *Truth* lies without *Favour* or *Affection*. For he that enquires only what can be said *against* the Matter he is offended at, doth thereby give a plain Indication that he is resolved to be offended at it *right or wrong*; and that the End of his Enquiry is not so much to *satisfie* his *Conscience*, as to *fortifie* his unreasonable *Prejudice*. Wherefore before we do *reject* the Conditions of our Church's Communion as *sinful*, we are obliged under the Penalty of wilful *Schism* impartially to enquire what is to be said *for* as well as *against* them; and for this End to *apply* ourselves to our Spiritual Governors and Pastors, and propose our *Doubts* to them, and attend to their *Resolutions* with an *honest, teachable* Mind that is willing to be informed; and were we are *capable* of judging, faithfully to peruse those *Books* and *Arguments* that make for the *one* side as well as the *other*. For unless we do thus, it is plain that we are *biassed* by a factious Inclination, and that we have a *great Mind* to separate from the Church's Communion. For if we were not *prejudiced* against her Authority by a *Schismatical* Temper of Mind, we should be as forward at least to consult what *may* be said *for* her Impositions, as what *is* said *against* them.

But

But then if the Matters she imposes are such as a *plain* and *illiterate* Communicant cannot *judge of*, nor comprehend the Force of the Reasons that make for against them, such Persons in such Cases are obliged humbly to *acquiesce* in the Church's Authority, and not blindly to separate from her they know not why. As for Instance, suppose the Matter imposed should be such a *Form* of Government, or such *Modes* of Discipline, or *Rights* and *Circumstances* of Divine Worship, as carry no such apparent Evil in them, or express Contradiction to any Command of our Saviour as to enable an illiterate Christian rationally to pronounce them unlawful, and whether they be unlawful or no is not to be determined perhaps without some Skill in the Original Languages, the critical Acceptions of Phrases, or insight into Ecclesiastical History or Metaphysical Niceties and Speculations; and it is by some of these that most of the Controversies between us and our *dissenting* Brethren are to be judged and decided. Now in such Matters as these, where he cannot judge for himself, what should an unlearned Communicant do; Why this he knows well enough, that it is his Duty in all lawful things to submit to the Governors of his Church, and reverence Christ's Authority in them; but whether the above-named Matters they impose be lawful or no, he neither doth nor can know. So that if upon the score of those Impositions, he rejects the Church's Communion, he rejects it he knows not why; and to avoid doing that which he knows is a Duty. So that whether that which the Church imposes be lawful or no, it is apparent Re-

bellion in him to refuse it ; because for all that he knows it is lawful, and though it should be unlawful, yet that cannot be the Motive of his Non-compliance with it, who doth not understand the Reasons that make it so. He therefore that separates from the Communion of the Church for Causes that he cannot judge of much necessarily separate without Cause or Reason ; he can have neither true nor false Pretence for his Separation ; because the Arguments *pro* and *con* are beyond the Sphere of his Cognizance ; and consequently, if he thereupon withdraw from the Church's Communion, it is not because he cannot comply with her sinful Impositions, but because he will not submit to her just Authority. Whereas by modestly submitting our Judgment to the Church's, in Cases where we cannot judge for ourselves, we take an effectual Course to secure our Innocence, For though that which the Church enjoins us should be materially sinful, yet to us who neither do nor can understand it to be so, will be imputed only as an innocent Error ; because by following the Church's Reason where our own cannot guide us, we take the best Course we can not to be mistaken ; and if we should be mistaken, we have this to excuse us, that it was by following an Authority which God himself hath set over us ; whereas if we are mistaken on the other side, we are left altogether inexcusable.

But then there may be other Conditions of Church Communion of whose Unlawfulness a Communicant may be very doubtful, though he be not confidently persuaded of it ; and what is to be done in this Case ? To which I answer ; First, that

that it is doubtless our Duty not rashly to determine any thing to be false or unlawful which our spiritual Governors have determined to be true or lawful. For we are bound by the Law of Christian Modesty, to conclude. that they having a larger Prospect of things than we, and *greater* Advantages of enquiring into them, are far more capable Judges of what is true and lawful; and consequently, though we may possibly have some little Probability that their Opinion is false, or their Command unlawful, yet we ought not to determine it so, unless it be in such plain and evident Cases as do not only out-weigh the Probability of their Opinions, but the Authority of them too. Wherefore in Cases of a doubtful Nature, it is both modest and safe to subscribe to the Judgment of our Superiors; because in so doing we have not only our own Ignorance to excuse, but their Authority to warrant us, and if we should happen to be in the Wrong through our Modesty and Humility, it will be safer for us, than to be in the Right through our Pride and Self-conceit. But perhaps the Probability of our side may be so great, or at least seem so to us, that notwithstanding we give all due Respect and Deference to her Authority, we cannot forbear doubting of the Lawfulness of her Conditions of Communion. If so, then, Secondly, it is to be considered that it is as much our Duty to obey her Commands in things that are lawful as not to obey them in things that are unlawful; and therefore if we only doubt whether her Commands be lawful or no, our Doubt ought to make us as fearful of disobeying as it doth of obeying them, because the Danger of sinning is on both

sides equal. And therefore in this Case, wherein I am necessitated to determine myself one way or the other, it is doubtless my Duty to determine on that side which makes most for the Church's Security and Peace, which next to the Honour of God and the Salvation of Souls ought to be preferred above all things; and which consequently if it be of any Weight with me, must necessarily turn the Scale of my Choice when it is before in *Æquilibrio*, and whether to obey or disobey be most for the Church's Peace, is very easy to be determined.

The Sum of all therefore is this, that it is our Duty to continue in strict Obedience to and Communion with that Particular Church whereof we are Members, so long as it enjoins us nothing that is plainly and apparently sinful; that if either we cannot judge of the Sinfulness or Lawfulness of her Conditions of Communion, or do only doubt of their Lawfulness, we are obliged to submit to her Judgment and Authority, and not to separate from her till upon an impartial Enquiry into the Reasons of both sides, we are fully convinced that they are sinful.

Now that this is an indispensable Duty of our Religion, is evident not only from the above-named Scriptures by which the Bishops of particular Churches are constituted the Overseers and Governors of them, and the Subjects and Members of those Churches are required to yield them Obedience; but also from those Texts which forbid Divisions in the particular Churches, such as 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that there be no Divisions among you;* and

and which bid us *mark them that cause Divisions among us and avoid them*, Rom. xvi. 17. and also which Schisms and Divisions to be Fruits of the Flesh, as particularly, 1 Cor. iii. 3. and St. Jude 19. and in a word, which requires us *to endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*, Ephes. iv. 3. *to be of one mind*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and to *stand fast in one Spirit with one Mind*, Phil. i. 27, all which was spoke to Christians as they were Members of Particular Churches, to oblige them by no means to dissent and separate from those Churches, unless they were forced to it by just and manifest Reasons; and methinks it is a most pathetical Conjunction of the Apostle, *If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, being of one accord, and of one mind*, Phil. ii. 1, 2, which Exhortation he gives them as they were a particular Corporation of Christians under *Epaphroditus* their Head and Bishop, by whom he sent this Epistle to them. The Sense of all which is, to oblige us not to disunite ourselves from the Church of which we are Members, so long as we are permitted to continue in her Communion without doing any thing that is apparently unlawful. Or if we suppose those Divisions which the Apostle speaks of, and forbids, to be meant of Factions within the Church without actual Separation, then much more is Separation, which is the highest Faction and Breach of Unity, to be lookt upon as wicked and unlawful. So that for Men to separate from the Church's Communion upon little Piques, uncertain Scruples, and blind Prejudices is a very

great and dangerous Sin against the Gospel ; it is a manifest Violation of the Laws of Union, and an open Rebellion against Christ's Authority in his Church. And being so, it is no wonder that in the purest Ages of Christianity it was branded with such an infamous Character. For thus in the 31 Canon of the Apostles, it is called Ambition and Tyranny, and condemned by *Ignatius*, the Disciple of St. *John*, as the *Ἀρχὴ κακῶν*, or Original of Evils. *Eph. ad Smyrn.* as a Sin that shuts Men out of the Kingdom of Heaven, *Ep. ad Philad.* and by the *African Code* it is stiled a destructive, sacrilegious Sin, *Con. Carth. &c. Can. 100.* and *S. Cyprian* makes it to be more heinous than the Sin of the *Lapsi* that offered Sacrifice to Idols to avoid Persecution, and to be such a Sin as Martydom itself would not expiate, *de Unit. Eccles.* and *Dionysius Alexandrinus* affirms, that to suffer Martyrdom rather than make a Schism in the Church is as glorious an Act as to die refusing to offer Sacrifice to Idols, *Euseb, Eccl. Hist. lib. 6.* And as they thus decry Schism, so on the contrary they extol Union, as the Nurse of Piety, the Fence of Religion, the Quintessence and Extract of all Christian Virtue.

And indeed, it is to the Unity of the Members of the Church among themselves that the Scripture attributes their Growth and Improvement in Piety and Virtue. For thus the Apostle tells us, not only that Charity (or mutual Agreement among Church Members) edifies, *1 Cor. viii. 1.* but also assures us that the whole Church or Collection of Members becomes an *holy Temple*, and an *Habitation of God*, by being *συναρμολογεμένη*, compacted
and

and closely united together in all its Parts, *Ephes.* ii. 21, 22. and *Ephes.* iv. 16. he tells, that the Church *increases or improves unto the edifying itself in Love by being closely compacted and united in all its Parts and Members*, and *Col.* ii. 19. he tells us, that it is not only from its *Union with Christ*, and those nourishing Influences that are thereby conveyed from him, that the Church *increases with the increase of God*, but also from its *being knit together*, or firmly united in all its Parts. And if Union be so necessary to the Growth and Perfection of the Church, it can be no less necessary to the Improvement of each particular Member of it. For,

1. Schisms and unnecessary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally sour the Tempers of Men, and render them peevish and uncharitable towards one another. For the Separating Party must in their own Vindication be forced to accuse those they separate from of something that may be foul enough to justify their Separation, and what they want in Reality they must make up in Pretence, otherwise they will be looked upon as peevish and obstinate Schismatics; and then the Party they separate from, will be sure to deem itself injured; and in its own Defence be forced to recriminate, and this will alarm the Separatists into greater Heats and Animosities, and so like two Flints dash'd together, they will be continually sparkling and spitting Fire at one another, till they have kindled the Quarrel into an unquenchable Flame. Whereas had the Dividers but continued their Communion, all this might have been prevented, and they might have easily continued their Charity, though

though they had retained the Opinions upon which they separated. For had they but exercised that Modesty and Goodness as not to prefer their own private Sentiments before the Reason and Peace of the whole Church, they would either have kept their Opinions to themselves, or at least not have advanced them into Principles of Separation ; and so by continuing in Communion with that Party of the Church from whence they *dissented* in Opinion, they would have declared that they judged their Errors to be *tolerable*. For by not Separating from them, they would have plainly manifested that they saw Reason enough to Unite upon the score of those Points in which they were agreed, but none to Disunite upon the score of these in which they differed ; and consequently, that they had a great deal of Reason to love, but none to hate and persecute one another ; and whilst they mutually retained this good Opinion of one another, it is very unlikely that their little Differences should cause any great Breaches in their Charity. Schism therefore being so destructive to our Charity, which is one of the leading Virtues of our Religion, must needs have a very malevolent Aspect upon our Perseverance. For he that from a Charitable Temper, relapses into a spiteful and rancorous one, is Apostatised from one half of the Religion of a Christian, and hath exchanged one of the fairest Graces of a Saint, for one of the blackest Characters of a Devil. But then.

2. Schisms or unnecessary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally lead to the foulest Hypocrisies. For he that separates from a Church is a very bad Man, if he hath not a great Opinion of
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and Zeal for those things upon which he separates; which Zeal of his, when once he is actually separated, will be much more inflamed, and that both by the Opposition of the Church he is separated from, and the Instigation of the Sect he is separated to; and so by Degrees that holy Fervour which should animate him in the plain and unquestionable Duties of Religion, will blaze into a fierce Contention for those little Opinions that constitute the Sect he is engaged in. For our Nature being infinite and limited in all its Operations, it is impossible we should operate diverse ways at once with equal Force and Vigour; but whatsoever Time and Attendance we bestow upon one thing, we must necessarily subtract from another. Now whilst we continue in a peaceable Communion with the Church, we have no other use for our Zeal, but to inspire our Devotions, to quicken our Virtues, and to fight against our Sins with it, and this all Men agree is the best Use it can be put to; but when once we are entered into a *schismatical Separation*, we shall find other Employment for it; namely, to quarrel at Ecclesiastical Constitutions, to wrangle about Modes and Circumstances of Worship, and contend for our trifling Speculations and Opinions. Which must necessarily weaken in its nobler Operations, and render it more remiss and indifferent in the great and indispensable Duties of Religion; and whilst it is thus impertinently busied in picking Straws and contending about *Mint* and *Cummin*, to be sure it must more or less neglect the great and weighty things of the Law; and so proportionably as it grows warmer and warmer about little Opinions and

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Circumstances of Religion, it will be continually waxing cooler and cooler in the necessary and essential Duties of it ; till at last it is wholly degenerated into Peevishness and Faction. and dwindled away into a fierce Contention about Trifles. That this is the natural Effect of Schism appears by too many woful Experiments, For how many Instances of Men are there among ourselves. who had once an honest Zeal for the Life and Substance of Religion, and made great Conscience of *living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, but afterwards becoming *Bigots* to such a Sect or Party, have diverted the Stream of their Zeal into another Channel, where its irregular Current hath only made a Noise, and filled the World with a loud and turbulent Clamour about little things, but as to those great and important Duties upon which their Happiness depends hath been profoundly mute and indifferent ; and so their Religion, like an hectick Body, hath by degrees been consumed by its own Heats, whilst that Zeal and Fervour which should move and animate it hath been converted into its Disease, and wholly evaporated into Faction and Turbulency; and whilst their Zeal is thus misemployed about the little Trifles of their Sect, and they are ready to start at an innocent Ceremony, and to swoon at the sight of an indifferent Mode and Appendage of Religion, as if they were afraid lest it should infect them at a distance, they can swallow Camels though they strain at these Gnats, and glibly digest the grossest Immoralities.

3. And lastly, Schisms and unnecessary Breaches of Church Communion do naturally lead to down-
right

Chap. IV. *The Perfective Duties.*

right Irreligion. For when once a Man departeth from an established Church without a just Warrant, there is nothing can confine or set Shores to him, he hath no Principles, that can stay him any where, or set any Measures of changing to him. For when upon a meer Humour or Fancy he hath run from the Church to such a Sect, what should hinder him from running from that Sect to another, and so on from Sect to Sect, till he hath run himself out of all Religion? He is rolling down a steep Hill, and hath no Principles to stay him, so that it is impossible to determine whither he will go, or where he will stop: he may perhaps stay at such an Opinion, but if he doth it is by chance, and if he doth not, he will be endlessly rolling from one Opinion to another, and shifting his Church, as oft as his Almanack. For Schism is a large *Labyrinth*, that naturally divides and subdivides into infinite Paths and Alleys, wherein a Man may wander to Eternity, and the farther he goes, the more he may lose himself; and then when he hath wandered a while out of one wild Opinion into another, and still perceives that the farther he goes, the more he is dissatisfied, it is a thousand to one if he doth not at last *suspect* and question all Religion, as if the whole were an intricate maze of absurd or doubtful Opinions, contrived on purpose to amuse Men's Minds, and intangle them in endless Perplexities. For the *Schismatick*, as I shewed before, doth commonly place a great Part of his Religion in that Opinion upon which he divides and separates, so that if once he be dissatisfied with this, as in all probability he will quickly be, having begun already to ring Changes, he will be
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under a great Temptation to mistrust the whole Religion to be as great an Imposture as he finds this darling Opinion is; especially after he hath run through several Sets of Opinions, and finds them at last to be all Delusions. For as weak Heads, when they perceive the Battlements shake are apt to suspect that the Foundations are infirm; so weak Understandings will be ready to suspect even the fundamental Principles of Religion, when once they perceive those darling Notions totter which they have confidently presumed to superstruct upon it. Upon this Account therefore I make no doubt, but that the *Atheism* of this present Age, is very much owing to its Sects and Divisions. For how many woful Examples have we of Persons who had once a great deal of Zeal for, and Satisfaction in Religion, that upon their causeless Defection from the Church's Communion have run from *Sect* to *Sect*, and from one extravagant Opinion to another, till being at last convinced of the Cheats and Impostures of them all, they have discarded Religion itself, and made their last resort into Atheism and Infidelity? Since therefore Schism hath so many Mischiefs attending it, and such as do manifestly endanger our Perseverance in Religion, it highly concerns us as we would hold out to the End in the Course of our Christian Warfare to keep close to the Communion of the Church.

VI. To our final Perseverance in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that we should not stint our Progress in Religion (out of a fond Opinion that we are good enough already) to any determinate Degrees or Measures of Goodness.

For

For thus we are enjoined not only to have Grace, but ſtill to be *growing in it*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. and not only to *do the work of the Lord*, but to *abound in the doing it*, 1 Cor. xv. 58, and not only to *walk in all well-pleaſing to God*, but to *abound in ſo doing more and more*, 1 Theſ. iv. 1. *to forget what is behind*, i. e. the Degrees of Virtue and Goodneſs we have already attained, and to be ſtill *preſſing forward to the mark of our high calling*, Phil. iii. 13. 14. The Senſe of all which is, that we ſhould not limit ourſelves to any preſent Attainments, out of a ſlothful Opinion that we are good enough already, but that we ſhould ſtill be proceeding on to farther and farther Degrees of Perfection. For Holineſs is every where enjoined in the Goſpel in unlimited and indefinite Meaſures, and our Progreſs in it hath no other Boundary than the fartheſt Degree of poſſible Perfection. An Injunction which will keep us for ever ſufficiently employed, and oblige us to Eternity to be ſtill aspiring beyond our preſent Attainments; and the Neglect of this is doubtleſs the Occaſion of many a Man's final Miſcarriage. They aim at no more than what is abſolutely neceſſary to remove them from the Brink of eternal Perdition, and if they can but ſo far prevail againſt their Sin, as to arrive at the loweſt Degree of ſincere Obedience, and but juſt paſs the Line which ſeparates between a bad and good State, that ſo if they die as they are, they may hope to eſcape Hell, and arrive at ſome Degree of Happineſs, they think they have every fairly acquitted themſelves. But now beſides that that Line which parts thoſe two States of Sin and Grace is not ſo eaſily diſcernable, but that you may
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very probably be deceived, and imagine that you are got over it into the State of Grace, whilst you are yet upon the Frontiers of the Dominion of Sin, and so may perish at last at the very Mouth of your Harbour ; besides that it is a fearful Sign that you are *yet in your Sins*, that you design no farther but just to escape that *everlasting Ruin* that attends them, which plainly shews that the *Fear of Hell* is the Soul of your Religion, and that there is not the least Degree of true *Love to God* intermingled with it, without which your Religion will be altogether insignificant ; besides all this, I say, whilst you rest in such an imperfect State of Goodness, you dwell in the next Neighbourhood to a sinful State, and so are in continual danger of returning thither again. For how is it possible you should be safe, while you stay upon the Brink of that miserable State out of which you are but just emerged and recovered, and have so many strong Inclinations within you, concurring with the numberless Temptations without you, to thrust you headlong back again into it ? So that if you would be secure, it is not sufficient for you just to get out of your sinful State, and stay there, but you must still be removing farther and farther from it by proceeding on still to farther Degrees of Perfection. For you must consider that there is a vast Distance between a State of sincere, and of confirmed Goodness, and that all the while you are passing on from the one to the other, you are more or less in Danger of relapsing. For you have been sincerely good, ever since your first Entrance into a firm and hearty Resolution of Amendment ; but alas since that, how many times have you been
been

been in Danger of relapsing into your old sinful Courses again? What strong Contentions have there been between your *Flesh* and your *Spirit*, your bad Inclinations, and your pious Resolutions? and though the latter hath been most commonly victorious, yet how often hath it been yielding, yea, how often hath it been vanquish't? Inform much that if you had not by a quick Repentance revived it immediately, it had been dead long since, and you had been as much enslaved to your Lusts as ever. And from these Dangers you will never be wholly free, till you have utterly extinguish't your vicious Inclinations, and in-wrought all the Virtues of Religion into your Natures; and then you will be arrived to that confirmed State of Goodness, from which it will be morally impossible for you to revolt. If therefore you would secure your Perseverance to the End, beware you do not limit yourselves in the Way; for though if you die but just sincerely good, you shall certainly escape Hell; yet in all probability you will not be long sincerely good, unless you be something more; that is, unless you proceed in the Degrees of Virtue, and do more and more suppress your Evil, and improve your good Dispositions and Inclinations. For so long as there remains in you any Lust to Evil you will be in Danger of being betrayed by it; and the stronger that Lust is, the more it threatens your Destruction. So that you can never be safe, so long as you have an Enemy alive in your Breast, and whilst you rest in any Attainment on this side the confirmed State of Virtue, in which there is an utter Extinction of all evil Inclinations, you are more or less in Danger, proportionably

as you are more or less distant from that happy Period.

VII. To our final Perseverance, it is also necessary that we should frequently entertain ourselves with the Prospect of our Mortality, and endeavour to compose ourselves before-hand into a good Posture of dying. For thus we are called upon in this our militant State *to consider our latter end*, Deut. xxxii, 29. and by the Examples of the best Men are invited *to number our Days that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom*, Psalm xc. 12. and *to wait till our Change comes*, Job. xiv. 14. to which End we are put in Mind that *here we have no abiding City*, Heb. xiii. 14. and *that it is appointed for all Men once to die*, Heb. ix. 27. and *that our Life is even as a Vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away*, James iv. 14. and to this purpose the Apostle applies this Consideration, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. Now *this I say, Brethren*, (that is, of our Abode and Continuance here, upon which he exhorts us to compose ourselves to a great Indifferency as to the things of this World,) *it remains that both they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this World as not abusing it, for the fashion of this World passes away, i. e. since your time here is very short endeavour before-hand to loosen yourselves from this World, and to put yourselves into a fit Posture of leaving it; for it is but a short Scene that will quickly be shifted, and then there will an eternal State of things succeed.*

And

And indeed since to die well, is the last Act and final Consummation of our Christian Warfare, it must needs highly concern us to arm and prepare ourselves for it before-hand, lest we lose the blessed Prize by stumbling just at the Goal, and after a long Voyage miscarry for ever within Sight of Harbour. For in the Hour of Death we throw our last Cast for an Eternity of Happiness or Misery, and how much are we concerned to throw that well, upon which so vast a Stake depends? O! it is a serious thing to die, to pass this dark Entry of Eternity, through which as we go right or wrong we are made or undone for ever. For to carry us right through, it is not a few death-bed Sorrows, or good Wishes, a few extorted Promises, or forced Resolutions, or frightful Prayers, or *Lord have Mercy upon us*, will serve the turn; O! no, it is an expensive Passage, which we shall never be able to defray, unless we carry along with us a large Stock of spiritual Preparations. We shall have need of a strong and active Faith, of a Mind well furnished with wise Considerations, of a deep, a large, and a tried Repentance, and unrestrained Charity, a confirmed Patience, a profound Submission to the Will of God, and a well-grounded Hope of a blessed Eternity. For without all these together, we shall be very ill-accounted to die, and run a dreadful Hazard of miscarrying for ever. And these are such things as do not usually spring up like *Mushrooms* in a Night, or in the few disturbed Moments of a dying Time, but do ask a much larger and serener Season to grow and ripen in. So that if we mean to die well, and so come off victoriously in this last Act of our

spiritual Warfare, we must now, while we are well, be frequently entertaining our Meditations in the *Charnel-House*, and read *Lectures* to ourselves upon the *Skeletons* and *Death-heads* there; those Emblems and Representations of our approaching Mortality, and from them take such lively Pictures of the King of Terrors, as may render his grim Visage and fearful Addresses so familiar to us, as that our Thoughts may be before-hand accustomed to the manner of his Approaches; with what an Army of Diseases he is wont to lay Siege to the Fort of our Life, how in Despight of all the Resistances of Nature he plants and quarters them in our Veins or our Arteries, our Stomachs or our Bowels, and from thence infests us all over with continual Anguish and Pain; how when he hath tired and exhausted us with his continual Batteries, and worn out our Strength with a succession of wearisom Nights to sorrowful Days, he at last storms the Soul out of all the Out-works of Nature, and forces it to retire into the Heart; and how when he hath marked us for dead with a Baptism of clammy and fatal Sweats, he summons our weeping Friends to assist him to grieve and vex us with their parting Kisses and sorrowful Adieus; and how at length, when he is weary of tormenting us any more, he rushes into our Hearts, and with a few Mortal Pangs and Convulsions, tears the Soul from thence, and turns it out to seek its Fortune in the wide World of Spirits, where it is either seized on by Devils, and carried away to their dark Prisons of *Sorrow* and *Despair*, there to languish out its Life in a dismal Expectation of that dreadful Day
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wherein it must change its bad Condition for a worse ; or be conducted by Angels to some blessed Abode, there to remain in unspeakable Pleasure and Tranquillity, till it is crowned with a glorious Resurrection. Now since it is most certain that we must all one time or other experience these things but most uncertain how soon ; how much doth it concern us to think of them before-hand, and to forecast such Provisions and Preparations for them, as that whensoever they happen we may not be surprized. For besides that the frequent Meditation of Death will familiarize its Terrors to us, so that whensoever it comes, our Minds, which have been so long accustomed to converse with it, will be much less startled and amazed at it ; besides that, it will wean us from the inordinate Desire and over-eager Prosecution of the things of this World, which, as I told you before, are the Snares with which our Vices do too often intangle us ; besides all this, I say, it will put us upon laying in a Store of spiritual Provisions against that great Day of Expence. For he that often considers the dreadful Approaches, the concomitant Terrors, and the momentous Issues and Consequents of Death, must be strangely stupefied if he be not thereby vigorously excited to fore-arm and fortify himself with all those Graces and Defences that are necessary to render it easy, safe, and prosperous.

VIII. To our final Perseverance in the Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that in Order to the putting ourselves into a good Posture to die, we should discharge our Consciences of all the Reliques and Remains of our past Guilt. For so

we are commanded to take care *that our Hearts be sprinkled from an evil Conscience*, Heb. x. 22. and *to hold Faith and a good Conscience*, 1 Tim. i. 19. and *to make this our rejoicing, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. i. 12. In a word, *to live in all good Conscience*, Acts xiii. 1. and *to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men*, Acts xxiv. 16. Which though they are general Duties, do necessarily imply this Particular, that we should very nicely and curiously examine our Consciences, those faithful Records and Registers of our Actions, and where-ever we find the least *Item* of an uncanceled Guilt, immediately cross it out by a hearty Sorrow for, and moral Revocation of it. For notwithstanding we may have in the general repented of all our past Sins, yet there are some Sins, which, notwithstanding we re-act no more, do leave a lasting Guilt upon the Mind, which nothing can cancel but our actual revoking and unfinning them. As supposing that I have heretofore either by my bad Counsels or Example seduced other Men into wicked Courses; it is not sufficient for the Expiation of my Fault, that I myself abstain from those wicked Courses for the future, but I must endeavour to undo the Mischief which I have done to others by them, and by a solemn Recantation of my past Follies, by Persuasion and good Counsel, and the Application of all other pious and prudent Means, endeavour to reduce those whom I have formerly perverted. For till I have done this, I wilfully permit the mischievous Effect of my Sin to remain; and if when I have wounded another, I suffer him

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to perish without taking any Care of his Cure, I am guilty of his Murder though I never wound him more. Suppose again, that I have injured another by any malicious Slander or Calumny; it is not enough to acquit me of the Guilt of it, that I cease to scandalize him for the future, but I must also endeavour by a free Retraction to vindicate his injured Name from the ill Surmises of those to whom I have aspersed him; so long as his Reputation suffers through my not retracting the Calumnies I have cast upon it, I wilfully persist to defame and calumniate him, and so long the Guilt of it must stick and abide upon my Conscience. Once more, suppose I have injured another in his Estate, either by Theft, or Fraud, or Oppression, it will not be sufficient to acquit me, that for the future I forbear Defrauding, Forcing, or Stealing from him any more, but, if it be in my Power I must make Restitution of all that I have wrongfully deprived him of; and that to himself, if he be living, or if not, to those that succeed him in his Rights, and for want of such, to the Poor, who by God's Donation have the Propriety of all such Wastes and Strays as have no other Owner surviving. For it is certain that my wrongful Seizure of what is another Man's, doth not alienate his Right to it. so that he hath the same Right to it while I keep it from him, as he had at first when I took it from him; and consequently, till I restore it back to him, I continue to wrong him of it, and my detaining it is a continued Repetition of that Fraud, or Theft, or Oppression by which I wrongfully seized it; and whilst I thus continue the Sin, it is impossible but the Guilt of it must still abide

upon me. In these Cases therefore it concerns us to be very nice and curious in examining our Accounts, to see if there be any of these Scores yet uncanceled, any of these bad Effects of our Sin yet remaining. For if any such matter appear in our Accounts, it concerns us as much as our everlasting Interest amounts to, to use all present Care and Diligence to discharge it, that so before Death summons us to give up our Accounts to the great Auditor of the World, all Scores between him and us may be evened and adjusted. And indeed if we would be safe, it vastly imports us to leave as little as may be to do upon a Death-bed; for that is most commonly a very improper State for religious Action; since, for all we know, we may be distracted in it by a Fever, or stupefied by an Apoplexy, or deprived of the Use of Reason by the insufferable Torments of a Stone; either of which will render us incapable of every thing, but dying. Or, if neither of these should happen, yet to be sure a dying State will bring Work enough with it; Sorrows and Care enough, Fears and Impatiences enough to exercise all our Virtue, and employ all our Reason. So that if we carry with us to our Death-bed any Item or Relique of uncanceled Guilt, it is a thousand to one but in the Hurry of dying we shall leave it uncanceled, and be arrested for it by the Divine Justice when we come into Eternity. Wherefore, as we would prevent this fatal Issue of our Christian Warfare, it concerns us now we are well, to make a diligent Inspection into our Consciences, to see if there yet remains any old Reckonings of Guilt undischarged by us; and if there be, not to give rest to our Eyes, nor

slumber

slumber to our Eye-lids till by an actual unfinning and Revocation of the Facts, we have totally crossed and discharged them. But then because many of these may slip out of our Mind, and so be past Recovery ;

IX. To the happy Conclusion of this our Christian Warfare, it is also necessary that to compensate, so far as we are able, for these Reliques of Guilt in us. we should take Care to redeem the time we have formerly mis-spent in sinful Courses, by being doubly diligent in the Exercise of all the contrary Virtues, and the doing all the contrary Good we are able. For of all the outward Blessings that God affords us, our Time is incomparably the most precious and inestimable ; and therefore though he gives us his other Blessings in great Variety, and provides for us a plentiful Choice of Meats, Drinks, and Raiment, yet in the Distribution of our time he seems to be more sparing and strait-handed ; for he gives it not to us in Rivers, but Drop by Drop, and Minute after Minute, so that we can never enjoy two Moments together, but whenever he gives us one, he always takes away another. And yet, good God ! what Waste do we make of these precious Drops of which thou art so nice and sparing ? How great a part of it do we continue in our Childhood upon the indifferent Vanities of Nuts and Rattles, and afterwards upon the much more ridiculous and unreasonable ones of our vicious, profuse, and extravagant Appetites ? So that by that time we come to a serious Prosecution of the great End of our Beings, the main Part of our time is usually elapsed beyond revocation. How much therefore doth it

it concern us, after we have so prodigally squandered away the greatest part of the Treasure of our Time, to make the best Improvement of the small Remainder? that so we may at least morally recover, that which is physically irrecoverable. For though we cannot cause the past Minutes we have ill spent to be present again, yet we can redouble our Diligence for the future, and thereby render every one Minute to come equivalent to every two that are past. For by a double Diligence we may live as much in one Day, as we can in two by a single, and consequently, by doubly improving that Part of our time which is yet good and to come, we may morally retrieve that Part which is lost and gone.

This therefore the Gospel requires at our hands, that after we have lived out a great part of our Time to no Purpose, we should from thenceforth live much in a little while, and retrieve our *past* Negligence by our *future* Diligence, and redeem the Time we have spent upon our Lusts, by exerting the contrary Virtues more vigorously for the future; that the more prophane we have been for the time past, the more devout we should be for the time to come; that the more we have abounded heretofore in Frauds and Oppressions, the more we should abound hereafter in Charity and Alms; that the more industrious we have been to seduce and debauch Men, the more zealous we should be to reduce and reclaim them; and by our future Candor and charitable Construction of Men, endeavour to compensate for the Malice of our past Slanders and Defamations. Thus *Ephes. iv. 28. Let him that stole, steal no more; say, but*
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that

that is not enough, but he must also endeavour to redeem his past Thefts by a more vigorous Exercise of the contrary Virtue for the future; *but rather let him labour, working with his own Hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs*: So also, *Dan. iv. 27. Break off thy Sins by Righteousness, and thine Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor, i. e.* whereàs for the Time past the Course of thy Life hath very much abounded with Cruelty and Injustice, do thou now endeavour to redeem the Guilt of it, (for so the *Hebrew* Verb signifies,) by exerting more vigorously the contrary Virtues, *viz.* of Justice to all, and of Mercy to the Poor and Afflicted. And to this Purpose *St. Paul's* Example is proposed to our Imitation, who, because for the Time past he had been a great Persecutor of Christianity, did for the future labour more abundantly than any other Apostle to advance and propagate it, *1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.* The Observance of which Rule is highly necessary to the reducing this our Warfare to a prosperous Issue, For, as I told you before, there are many Sins which after we have forsaken the Practice of them, do stick such a Guilt upon the Conscience, as without our undoing them, so far as we are able, is not to be wiped off; such as wicked Counsel, malicious Detraction, and unjust Gain, all which we are bound, so far as it is our Power, not only to avoid, but actually to revoke. But alas! there are many of these which in a long Course of Sin are utterly forgotten by us, and consequently are past Revocation, and in this Case all we can do to take off the Guilt of them, is in the general Course of our Lives to abound in the Practice of the contrary
Virtues,

Virtues, and do the utmost Service we are able to the Souls, and good Names, and Bodies of Men. For Charity, saith the Apostle, *shall cover a multitude of Sins*, 1 Pet. iv. 8. that is, when it appears by the Abundance of our Charity, that we would abolish and repair all the Injuries we have done, if it were in our Power, God in this Case will accept the Will for the Deed, and deal as mercifully by us as if we had actually done it. For if it appear in his Sight that we would do it if we could, we are in his Account as truly obedient to him as if we had actually performed it, and consequently shall be dealt with by the same Proportions of Mercy. But it is only an extraordinary Charity that can evidence this; since what is ordinary we are obliged to though we had no past Injuries to abolish; but to ensure our Reconciliation with God, it is requisite that we should evidence to him our sincere Willingness, to do not only what we should have been obliged to if we had not been injurious, but also what we are obliged to since we have been injurious. Now as actual Reparation, so far as we are able, is necessary to evidence this, when we remember the Injuries we have done, so an extraordinary Charity is no less necessary to evidence this, when we have forgotten them. And this I suppose is the meaning of that parallel Passage of *St. James, Chap. v. 20. He that converteth a Sinner from the Error of his way, shall save a Soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of Sins, i. e.* by such an illustrious Act of Charity to the Soul of his Brother, he shall obtain Pardon of God for many of those forgotten Injuries which he hath formerly done, and is now no otherwise able to repair. So
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that if we would make sure Work of our Christian Warfare; and ascertain its being finally crowned with Success; as in general we must endeavour to redeem the past time we have spent in vicious Courses by abounding in the Practice of the contrary Virtues; so in particular, if for the time past we have lived in any of those injurious Courses which do naturally fix a more lasting Guilt upon the Mind, we must take Care not only to repair, so far as we are able, those Injuries we remember, but also to wipe off the Guilt of those we have forgotten, by an extraordinary Charity and Beneficence, by laying hold of all Opportunities to do Good, and endeavouring in our several Stations, according as God hath enabled us, to reduce the Souls, relieve the Bodies, and vindicate the Reputation of our Brethren.

X. And lastly, To our final Perseverance in well-doing, it is also necessary that we should labour after a rational and well-grounded Assurance of Heaven. I put this in the last Place, because it is usually the last attained, and is not to be presently expected and caught at as soon as we are entered into a religious State. For there are a great many Stages of Religion to be past, before we can modestly expect to arrive at Assurance. In the Beginning of our Religion, when we are just recovered out of a vicious State, we cannot but be sensible, if we do at all understand ourselves, that we are as yet in a great deal of Danger, and do border so very near upon that bad State we are escaped from; that it is almost impossible to distinguish whether we are in or out of it. For though we are fully purposed and resolved against it, yet
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we cannot well divine what will be the Issue of it. Our Resolution is yet so young, so raw and unexperienced, and besieged with so many powerful counterstriving Inclinations, that we cannot confide in it without great Folly and Presumption. For till sufficient Trial hath been made of it, for all that we know, it may prove to be only a Godly Mood, or a short lucid Interval between the raving Fits of our Lust and extravagant Affections, which in a few Days perhaps may return again, and utterly alienate and distract us from all our sober Counsels and Purposes. And if it should so happen, that which we now look upon as our Cure and Recovery, will prove but an Intermission of our Disease. And when for some time we have tried our Resolution, and found that it hath bravely resisted those Temptations that have hitherto assaulted it, yet we cannot presently be reasonably assured of it, considering the Fickleness and Inconstancy of our Nature. For it may be it hath not been yet assaulted on the weak Side, or it hath not been *nick'd* with a seasonable Temptation, or it may be we may be more remiss and careless another time, or more vehemently inclined to a vicious Compliance; and then those Temptations which we have hitherto conquered, may captivate and subdue us. And if it thus happen, that which we now look upon as an everlasting Breach between us and our Lusts, may prove only a Pet or short Distaste, and like the Fallings out of Lovers end in the renewing of Love. And till we have made some considerable Progress in the Mortification of our sinful Inclinations, and the Acquisition of their contrary Habits, our Religion will have

so many Flaws, Defects, and Imperfections in it, as will give us great Reason if we have any Modesty in us, to be very fearful and jealous of it. But since without Sincerity in Religion we can have no Title to Heaven, it hence follows, that without a clear Sense of our Sincerity, we can have no Assurance of our Title to it; and such a clear Sense as is necessary to found such an Assurance on, is not to be acquired, you to see, without a thorough Trial of our Resolution in a long and vigorous Course of Religion. So that for Men to be immediately snatching at Assurance, as soon as ever they are entred into a good Life, argues them not to be so sensible, as they should be, of their own Imperfection and Frailty; they ought in Modesty to expect a while, and not conclude too soon for themselves, till they have made a thorough Trial of their Resolution; and in the mean time to strive on, in Hope that by the Blessing of God concurring with their Endeavours, they shall at last attain such a certain Sense and Feeling of their own Sincerity. as will be sufficient to infer a firm and rational Assurance. For Assurance being the Top of Christian Attainment, we must ascend to it gradually, by the intermediate Staves and Rounds of a tried and lasting Obedience, and not leap up in an Instant before we have taken all the Steps and Degrees that lead thither.

But though we ought not to be too forward in our Assurance, yet we are bound to labour after it in due and regular Way; that is, to persist in our Obedience till we have reduced our inward and outward Motions to such a Degree of Conformity to the Standard of the Gospel, as that
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upon comparing ourselves with it, we may be able without Flattery or Presumption to conclude our own Sincerity and Uprightness. I know there is a much shorter Passage to Assurance, which some of late have pretended to ; and that is, by certain unaccountable Incomes and Manifestations of God's Spirit, who, as they pretend, doth immediately whisper and reveal to them their Title and Interest in Heaven. But this, alas ! is too much like the *North-East* Passage to the *Indies*, which is shorter indeed, if it could be found, but so very dangerous, that I doubt there are but few that attempt it but miscarry, and it is well if they do not finally perish in the Discovery. Not that I do in the least doubt but God doth many times suggest and whisper unspeakable Comforts and Assurances to the Minds of good Men ; but then it is to be considered that this is an arbitrary Gift, which he seldom, if ever, bestows but in extraordinary Cases, when it is necessary to encourage us to some great Work, or to support us under some extraordinary Suffering. For he is a wise and careful Father of his Children, and knows it is much more necessary for us to be good, than to be ravished and transported : and that such high Cordials are neither proper nor safe for us but in great Extremities ; and therefore for us to expect that he should make them our ordinary Food and Entertainment is an Argument of our childish Ignorance and Presumption. But though such immediate Whispers and Revelations may serve to good Purposes in a Pinch of Extremity, yet are they by no means to be built upon as the Foundations of our ordinary, standing Assurance. For so long
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as there is an evil Spirit without, and a disordered Fancy within us, that can imitate these Whispers, we shall be continually liable, so long as we put Confidence in them, to all the Cheats and Impostures of natural and Diabolical Enthusiasm, and unavoidably mistake many an Injection of the Devil, and many a warm Flush of Fancy, or brisk Fermentation of melancholy Humour, for a Whisper and Testimony of the Spirit of God, and by this means be often lulled into false Confidences and Assurances, which like golden Dreams will vanish when we awake, and leave us miserably disappointed. That Assurance therefore which we are to aim at, must be founded in the Testimony of a good Conscience, and inferred from the Sense of our own Integrity and Uprightness.

And this we are commanded to endeavour after; *Heb. x. 22.* we are bid *to draw near unto God, ἐν πληροφροῖα πίστεως*, in Confidence, or full Assurance of Faith, that is in a firm Persuasion of God's Love to us, and our Interest in his Promises; which Persuasion is to be founded upon an inward Sense of our having *our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water*; and accordingly, *Heb. vi. 11.* *to be diligent in good Works, to the full Assurance of Hope unto the end, i. e.* to be so diligent in our Duty as that we may thereby acquire such a full Assurance of our Reward as may enable us to continue and hold out to the end. For St. *John* tells us, that it is by the Integrity of our Virtue, and particularly of our Love to one another, that we are to assure our Hearts before God, *1 Joh. iii. 14, 19.* for saith he, *ver. 21.* *If our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence*

dence towards God ; and for this purpose among others, the same Apostle tells us he *wrote this Catholick Epistle*, that the true Christians might *know and be assured that they had eternal Life*, 1 John v. 13.

From all which it is evident, that it is our Duty to labour after such an Assurance of Heaven, as naturally ariseth from the clear and certain Sense of our Sincerity towards God, and the firm Belief of the Promise of eternal Life, to which our Sincerity entitles us. For when we are so far improved in Religion, as that upon an impartial Survey of ourselves we can feel our own Integrity, and sensibly perceive that our Intention is pure, our Resolution fixed, and our Heart intirely devoted to God, we may from thence most certainly infer our Title and Interest to the Promise of Heaven. So that to the obtaining this Assurance, all that we have to do is, so far to purify our Intentions from sinister Aims, and subdue our bad Inclination to our Resolution of Obedience, as that whenever we reflect upon, and compare ourselves with the Rule, our Conscience may be able without any Diffidence to pronounce us sincere ; and then we may as certainly conclude our Interest in Heaven, as we can that God's Promises are true ; and if after we are thus far improved in Religion, we still remain unassured, it proceeds not from the want of sufficient Evidence, but either from a melancholy Temper, or a weak Faith, or a misinformed Conscience ; and which soever of these is the Cause of it, when that is once removed, we shall as plainly feel our own Sincerity, and therein our Interest in Heaven, as we do now our bodily Passions.

Passions. And having once attained this Assurance, it will animate our Hearts with an heroic Courage against all Temptations, and carry us on with unspeakable Alacrity through all the remaining Stages of our Duty ; it will invigorate our Endeavours, and wing our Activity, and make us all Life and Spirit in the Exercises of our holy Religion. And as when the Christian Army, after a tedious March towards the Land of *Canaan*, came within view of the *holy City*, and beheld afar off the Towers and Turrets of *Hierusalem*, they were so ecstasied with Joy, that they made the Heavens ring with triumphant Shouts and Acclamations, and as if that Sight had given new Souls to them, ran on upon their Enemies with a Courage that forced Victory wherever they came ; so when a good Man after a long Progress from one Degree of Virtue to another, is got so far as that from a certain Sense and Feeling of his own Sincerity, he can discern the new *Hierusalem* above, and his own Interest in it, that blessed Sight will fill him with so much *Joy, Courage and Alacrity*, that no Temptation for the future will be able to withstand or interrupt him. So that his Conscience will be always ringing with Acclamations of Victory, and the remainder of this March will be all a *triumphal Progress* to him ; and when he comes to the Conclusion of it, to die, and pass the Gate of this blessed City, the firm Assurance which he hath of Admittance, will dispel the Fears, sweeten the Troubles, and assuage the Pangs and Agonies of the dolorous Passage. So that he will die not only with Peace, but with Joy, and go away into Eternity with *Hallelujahs* in his

Mouth. If therefore we mean to bring this our spiritual Warfare to a happy Conclusion, it concerns us now, while we have Opportunity, to labour after a wise and well-grounded Assurance of Heaven.

S E C T. VI.

Containing certain Motives to press Men to the Practice of these Duties of Perseverance in the Christian Warfare.

HAVING in the foregoing Section described all those Duties which appertain to the last Part of our Christian Warfare, to wit, final Perseverance; and shewn how effectually they all contribute thereunto, I shall now, according to my former Method, conclude with some Motives to press and persuade Men to the Practice of them; all which I shall deduce from the Consideration of the great and urgent Necessity of our final Perseverance, to which those Duties are such necessary Helps and Means. For unless we take in the Assistance of these Duties, in all Probability we shall never be able to hold out to the End; and unless we persevere to the End, we are guilty of the most fatal and mischievous piece of Folly in the World. For consider,

1. If after we have made some Progress in Religion, we wilfully relapse, we shall go back much faster than ever we have proceeded.

2. If once we totally relapse, we shall thereby forfeit all the Fruit of our past Labour.

3. We

3. We shall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the greatest Difficulty of it.

4. We shall not only forfeit the Fruit of our past Labour, but also render our Recovery more hazardous and difficult than ever.

5. We shall not only render our future Recovery more difficult, but also plunge ourselves for the present into a far more guilty and criminal Condition than ever.

6. We shall not only render ourselves for the present more guilty, but as a certain Consequence of that, expose ourselves, if we die in our Apostasy, to a deeper and more dreadful Ruin.

I. Consider, when once we have wilfully relapsed, unless we immediately recover, we shall go much faster back, than ever we went forward. For in the Beginning of our religious Progress, we are fain to sail for a great while against Wind, and Tide, against a strong Gale of Temptation from without, and a rapid Stream of Inclination from within, and while we do thus, we must be contented to get our Ground by Inches, and move forward by slow and insensible Degrees; but in all our wilful Apostasies, we are carried on *secundo flumine*, with a full Drift of Temptation and Inclination. So that if when once we have wilfully sinned we do not immediately check ourselves by Repentance, in all Probability we shall be driven farther back in a Day, than we shall be able to get forward in a Week. For your Progress in Religion lying up Hill, but your Apostasy down, you must expect when once you are falling, to descend much faster than ever you ascended, and to get far sooner

to the Bottom again than you can to the Top, tho' you should happen to fall just in the mid-way, and have no farther to the one than to the other. For it is hardly to be imagined what Strength a bad Inclination gets by a short Repast and Gratification; how when it hath been almost pined away by a long Abstinence, a Taste of sinful Pleasure will raise and revive it, and render it as brisk and vigorous as ever; insomuch, that it usually requires a great many Acts of Mortification, to re-extinguish that Life and Strength it acquires in one short Gratification. For as the fierce *Tyger*, after a long Confinement will lie down tamely in his Den, and by Degrees lose all his Fierceness, and grow manageable and obsequious, but let him take but one warm Draught of Blood, and his old savage Nature immediately revives, and he grows as cruel and outrageous as ever; just so it is with our wicked Inclinations, which being reduced from their Excesses, and kept under the close Confinement of a holy Resolution, will by Degrees grow tame and gentle, and forget the alluring Relishes of Sin; but if once we suffer them to break loose again, and to come at those sinful Pleasures from which they have been a long while alienated, they will soon recover their natural Wildness, and become as headstrong and violent as ever. Wherefore it mightily concerns us to have a great Care of all wilful Apostasies; for to be sure your first Slip will vehemently incline you to a second, and that more vehemently to a third, and so, like Men that are running headlong down Hill, the farther you go, the more you will be prest forward by your own Weight, and the harder it will be for you
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to stop and recover yourselves, So that if you do not immediately stop, you will by a few Days Sin lose back all the Ground you have got by many a Year's Warfare ; you will pull down more of your Religion by one wilful Sin, than you will be able to repair again by many a virtuous Action ; and like some prodigal Drudges, spend more in one mad Frolick, than you have earned by many a hard Day's Labour. And if you do thus, it is impossible you should ever improve ; for what you do in a Week, you will undo again in a Day, and so instead of pressing forward, you will dance in a Circle, and always end where you begun. So that unless you go on and persevere in well-doing, all your Strife and Warfare against Sin, will be but like rolling of a *Sisyphus's* Stone, which, after you have been a long while raising to the Top of the Hill, will in a Moment tumble down again upon you ; so that either you must undergo the same Pains to raise it again, or lie down under it, and tamely suffer yourselves to be crushed into eternal Ruin by it.

II. Consider, if after we have made some Progress in Religion we totally relapse, we thereby forfeit the Fruit of all our past Labour. For so God himself by the Prophet pronounces in the Case, *Ezek. xviii. 24. When the Righteous turns away from his Righteousness, and commits Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, shall he live ? All his Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in the Trespass that he hath trespassed, and in the Sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die, i. e.* how good soever he may have been for the Time past, if he doth not persevere to the End, but wilfully relapse

into Folly and Wickedness, all the Virtue he hath exercised, and all the Good he hath done, shall be quite struck off from his Accounts, and be never so much as mentioned to his Benefit and Advantage, but in that Wickedness, whereinto he is fallen he shall as certainly perish as if all his Life had been a continued Act, or uninterrupted Course of Iniquity. So also, *Heb. x. 38. if any shall draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.* And indeed this is a most necessary Effect of our Apostasy; for by falling off from our Christian Course, we put ourselves back into the same State and Condition wherein we were before we entered upon it; and the Effect of all those good things which we did from the Time we entered upon, to the Time we deserted it, will be so voided and abolished, that there will not remain the least Trace or Footstep of it in our Natures, but our Will will become as obstinate again, our Affections and Appetites as wild and extravagant as if we had all along permitted them to run on in an uninterrupted Course of Iniquity. And having thus extinguished all the good Effects of our past Warfare, and rendered by our wilful Apostasy our Natures as corrupt and depraved as ever, we shall thereby be exposed again to the Wrath and Displeasure of God. For God's Love and Hatred are invariably determined to the same Grounds and Reasons; and herein consists their Immutability, not that he always loves, or always hates the same Persons, out of a blind Fondness to the one, or unreasonable Prejudice to the other, but that he always loves and always hates them for the same Reasons; and he hath expressly declared, that Goodness and Wickedness are the contrary Reasons of this his
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contrary Affection to his Creatures ; which if it be it will hence necessarily follow, that as his Hatred must convert into Love to us when from wicked we become good, so his Love must convert into Hatred of us when from good we degenerate into wicked. Which Alteration of his Affection towards us, proceeds not from any change in his Nature, but from a change in ours ; he always proceeds upon steady and unchangeable Principles, and is for ever fixt and constant to the Reasons of his Love and Hatred ; which he could not be, if he did not alter his Affection to us when the reason of it is altered, if he did not abominate us when he sees us fallen and degenerated from that State of Goodness for the sake of which he loved us, and took pleasure in us. So that by wilfully retreating from our religious Progress, we do not only extinguish all those good Effects which it had produced in our Natures, not only revive those inveterate Lusts we had almost mortified, and blast those tender Graces which we had therein acquired and improved ; but as a Consequence of this, we run out of God's Arms and Embraces, and throw ourselves headlong from those glorious Hopes to which we have been all this while advancing with so much Labour and Difficulty. What a Madness therefore is it for Men to think of retreating that have once actually engaged in the Christian Warfare, to surrender themselves back into Captivity to their Lusts, after they had fought so many Combats against, and obtained so many Victories over them ; O consider but the great Pains you have been at, the many Prayers and Tears, Abstinencies and Self-denials, Struggles and Contentions with yourselves that

that it hath cost you to retrieve yourselves from the Dominion of Sin and the just Vengeance of God? and is it not a thousand Pities that all this should prove lost Labour in the End, and be rendered as fruitless and insignificant to us as if had never been; that after you have taken so much Pains to stem the difficult Tide, and are at last got within sight of Shore, you should now faint and yield to the Fury of it, and suffer your selves to be borne down by it again into that Ocean of Sin and Guilt out of which you were so safely recovered? Wherefore as you would not render *your labour in vain in the Lord*, and utterly defeat your selves of all the Fruit of your Religious Endeavours, be still persuaded to struggle and contend, to strive and *press forward to the mark of your high-calling*. For if now you slacken or remit your Endeavours, and yield to the Current of Temptation, you will soon be driven down by it again as far from the Love of God, and from the Hope of Heaven, as ever you were in the most degenerate State of your Natures.

III. Consider that if by wilfully sinning we retreat from our Christian Warfare, we shall forfeit the Fruit of our Labour after we have undergone the greatest Difficulty of it. For, as I shewed above, the main Difficulty of the Christian Warfare lies in the Entrance of it, and this I suppose you to have already past. You have already endured those sharp Pangs and Throes that are wont to accompany the Birth of a new Resolution; you have undergone the hard Penance of deep and thorough Consideration, the sharp Stings and Remorses of a solemn and sorrowful Repen-
tance;

tance; you have forced your most importunate Inclinations, and withstood the most violent Counter-struggling of a perverse and degenerate Nature; you have conquered your Will in the Height of all its Obstinacy and Resistance, and rescued it from the Arms of your Lusts when it was most enslaved and captivated by them; all this you did, if you did any thing to any Purpose; when you first entered upon this holy Warfare. And ever since you have been breaking the Strength of your evil Inclinations, and conquering the Antipathies of your Nature to your Religion; in which if you have made any Progress, you must by this Time have *broken the Heart* of the Difficulty of your Warfare, and have much less Opposition to contend with than ever. So that now in all Probability, there is nothing so difficult between you and Heaven, and that which you have already engaged with and surmounted; and will you now turn your Backs upon your Enemy, when his main Strength is spent, and you have already sustained the most violent Shocks of his Power? If you had retreated at the first Onset, when your Sin was seated in its Dominion, and you were yet but raising your Forces and arming your Resolution against it, it had been much more excusable; for then you had the sharpest Part of your Conflict to undergo, being to contend with a flushed and a victorious Enemy, who having as yet all his Strength about him, could not fail to put your Courage to a mighty Trial. But now to retreat, when you are past the worst, and have gotten above half way through; when you have pulled down your Lust from its Throne and Dominion, and so far subdued it

to your Religion and your Reason, that you have henceforward no more to do but to pursue a Victory which though you got with a great deal of Toil, you may finish with a great deal of Ease and Pleasure ; now, I say, to retreat in such a prosperous Juncture, and give up the blessed Prize which you have been so long contending for, what desperate Madness is it ! if you had never begun this Warfare, or yielded in the first Conflict of it. what a deal of Pains might you have saved ? How many Prayers and Tears, Struglings and Contentions with yourselves might you have escaped and avoided, and at last been in as good a Condition, if not a better, than that wherein your Apostasy will certainly leave you ? And when a Man hath been so long taking Heaven by Storm and Violence, when he hath broken through so many oppositions to come at it, and in despite of all the Darts of Temptation from without, and of all the Weights and Pressures of Inclination from within, he is gotten up as it were to the Top of the Scaling-Ladder, has laid his Hands on the Battlements of Heaven. and is ready to leap in and take Possession of the Joys of it, what a Madness is it for him now to let go his Hold and tumble Headlong down again into that Abyss of Sin and Misery out of which he had recovered himself with so much Labour and Difficulty ! Especially considering.

IV. That by this our Relapse we shall not only forfeit the Fruit of our past Labour, but also render our Recovery more hazardous and difficult than ever. For what the Apostle pronounces concerning *Apostates* from Christianity, is in a great

Measure applicable to those who having engaged in the Christian Warfare, fall off from it again to to their old sinful Courses; *it is impossible, i. e. it is extremely difficult, for those that were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; if they fall away, to renew them again to Repentance,* Heb, vi. 4, 5, 6. For besides that, by falling from his first Repentance, a Man grieves and chases the Holy Spirit from him, without whose Aid he can neither stand when he is up, nor recover when he is fallen; and having *chased him away*, he cannot well expect that he be will so ready to return and co-operate with him after he hath treated him so rudely by quenching his Motions, unravelling his Workmanship, and extinguishing all those heavenly Effects which his Grace had produced in his Soul. For how can this blessed Assistant of Souls but take it in great Disdain to be thus mocked and disappointed, when he had been so industriously labouring for a Wretch's Good, to lift him out of the Mire wherein he was sunk and perishing; and when he had succeeded so far in his Labour as to help him quite out, and was washing and cleansing his polluted Spirit, and dressing it for the Embraces of the Father of Spirits, to see this Wretch turn back after all, and plunge himself headlong into the Mire again, how can he but resent such an ungrateful Disappointment of his Labour with unspeakable Grief and Indignation? And if upon such Resentment he should, as he justly may, wholly retire from him, and leave him for ever to wallow in his own Heart's Lust, his Condition will not be only

only dangerous, but desperate. What the blessed Spirit will do in this Case, I cannot certainly determine, because he may do as he pleases, being totally released by the Sinners Apostasy from all Obligation of Promise. But it makes my Heart ache to think, how much Reason there is to fear that he will utterly forsake and abandon him, and not throw away any more of his Grace upon a Wretch on whom he hath already spent so much to no purpose. And if the heinous Affront which the blessed Spirit receives by your Apostasy should put him upon this Resolution, you are damned above-ground, and everlastingly forsaken of all Hopes of Recovery. But besides all this, (which one would think should be sufficient to startle any sober Man from making such a desperate Experiment) by falling off from your Repentance, you must needs be supposed to offer a mighty Violence to your Consciences ; which having been already awakened into a thorough Sense of your past Sins, must necessarily reflect upon your present Apostasy with unspeakable Horror and Affrightment; which if it doth not presently scare ye back again to Repentance, will put ye upon more desperate Courses than ever, For now if your Conscience won't be quiet, you have no other Remedy but to ruffle with it, and out-brave its Horrors by being more courageously wicked; and as those barbarous Parents that sacrificed their Children to *Moloch* were fain to make Noises round the burning Idol with *Drums* and *Timbrels* to drown their dying *Scrieks* and *Groans*, lest they should move them to Compassion ; so when by your wilful Relapses you have sacrificed your Conscience

to

to your Lust, and it begins to *Shriek out* from among those Flames of Guilt whereunto you have cast it, you have no other Remedy unless you repent immediately, but to make a Tophet round about it, and drown its Outcries in Excesses of Riot; to put ourselves into a tumultuous Hurry of Wickedness and Folly, that you may not hear those ill-boding Shrieks within, and to fear over the Wounds of your Conscience with a thick Custom of Sinning, that they may neither bleed nor smart. So that if once you turn *Recreant* to your Christian Warfare, you will be forced, in your own defence, to plunge your selves deeper into Sin than ever. For now you must sin not only to gratify your Lusts, but to stupify your Conscience, and this last you can never do without being excessively wicked. You now must be puny Sinners no longer, if ever you intend to sin quietly, but resolve to turn Heroes in Iniquity, and out-sin your natural Sense of Good and Evil. In order whereunto you must give your wounded Spirit *Gash* after *Gash*, and follow the *Blow* till you have left it past feeling; you must heap on Loads of Guilt upon your Conscience, till with the continued Pressure you have rendered it callous and insensible; and when by this means you have sunk your selves deeper into Sin than ever (as you will doubtless soon do) how much more difficult and hazardous must your Recovery be? For now you will need much more Assistance than ever you did in your first Repentance, and have much less Reason to expect it. So that though I dare not say your Condition will be desperate; yet I must tell ye it will be so fearfully dangerous, that unless God out of a peculiar

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Mercy to ye, awake ye by some extraordinary Providence, and at the same time co-operate with ye by an extraordinary Grace, you must certainly miscarry for ever.

V. Consider that by your deserting of the Christian Warfare, you will not only render your future Recovery more difficult, but you will also plunge yourselves for the present into a far more guilty and criminal Condition than ever. For thus *St. Peter* determines in the Case, *2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment; that is by relapsing into those sinful Pollutions out of which they had been rescued by the Belief and Knowledge of Christianity, they have rendered themselves much more guilty, than they were before when they were Infidels; so that if they had never been acquainted with the Gospel, nor taken one Step in the Paths of its holy Commandments, it had been much better for them, and God would have been much less angry and displeased with them. For by our Apostasy into a wicked Life, we do not only return back into as bad at least, if not a worse Condition than ever; but,*

First, We do also make void all those Operations of the Spirit of God, by which we were so effectually persuaded to undertake, and hitherto to prosecute the Christian Warfare. By relapsing into a
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state of Sin again, we wilfully undo all that he hath been doing, we revive those Lusts which he hath been mortifying, and root up those Graces which he hath been planting and watering within us; and when with great Contrivance and Industry he hath drest and cultivated our Nature, pluckt up the Weeds of it and planted it with the Flowers of Heaven, we wilfully spoil and lay it waste again, and turn his growing *Sharon* into a barren Wilderness. So that besides all that Guilt which arises from those sinful Courses whereunto we are relaps'd, we are now become guilty of the greatest Outrage to the Spirit of God; we are guilty of destroying the dearest Fruits of his Labour, of laying waste his Inclosures, quenching his Motions, extinguishing his Graces, and strangling all those heavenly Effects which he by his powerful Goodness had produced in our Natures. And what a black Aggravation of our Guilt must it be, thus to baffle and disappoint the Spirit of God? But then

Secondly, As by our Apostacy we offer the rudest Affront to the Holy Spirit, so we commit the greatest Violence both upon our Conscience and Experience. For in all Apostacies we sin with an awakened Conscience, with the Convictions of our Guilt glaring in our Eyes, and are fain to contend and struggle with our own Mind, before we can break through those Checks and Restraints it lays upon us, which must needs be a great Aggravation of our Guilt. For the more Light and Persuasion a Man sins against, the more of Will and Malice there is in his Sin, and consequently the more of Guilt. For what can be more malicious, than

for a Man to dare and defy his own Convictions, and charge into the very Mouth of them, while they are spitting Fire, and roaring everlasting Ruin against him? This plainly shews him to be acted by a desperate Resolution, when for the sake of his Lusts he dares confront the Terrors of his Conscience, and rather than be barred the Enjoyment of them, he will plunge himself headlong into a foreseen Ruin, and leap after them into Hell with his Eyes open. And yet thus we do in all our wilful Apostacies; we sin against the quickest Sense of our Danger, the loudest Warnings of our Conscience, and the clearest Convictions of our Reason; which being all most horrid Aggravations, must needs swell up our Guilt to a monstrous Proportion. Neither do we sin only against our Conscience, but also against our Experience. For it is to be supposed that we have made some Proof and Trial of Religion, and having done so, we must needs be sensible that there is nothing in it but what is reasonable, and practicable, and highly for our Good; nothing but what tends to the Tranquillity of our Minds, the Peace of our Consciences, and the Perfection of our Natures; and being thoroughly assured of all this, and that not so much by Discourse as by our own Sense and Experience, what a horrid Baseness would it be, if notwithstanding this we should renounce and desert it? If we had never tried it, we might have urged our Ignorance or Want of Experience as an Apology for our Refusal to submit to it; we might have pretended that for want of a more intimate Acquaintance with it, we lookt upon its Commands as impossible, or at least as very difficult and altogether fruitless
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and ungrateful to human Nature, and that if we had once complied with it, we must have presently renounced every thing that is pleasant and desirable, and from thenceforth have been contented to sigh away our Lives in unsufferable Severities, and a melancholy Retirement from all the Joys and Festivities of human Conversation ; for such frightful Representations Men that are unexperienced in Religion are apt to make of it ; which though it be far from justifying, may in some Measure extenuate their Enmity to it. But you that have tried Religion, must needs have experienced that all this is false ; that its Commands are easy enough to a willing Mind, and that the many Advantages they bring with them do abundantly compensate for their Difficulty ; that they are so far from barring Men any innocent Pleasure, or Comfort of human Life, that they purify the Pleasures of it, and render them more grateful and generous ; that besides this, they bring mighty Pleasures of their own along with them, the Pleasures of a glorious Hope, a serene Mind, a calm and undisturbed Conscience, which are such as do far out-relish the most studied and artificial Luxuries ; all this you cannot but know, if you have made any considerable Trial of a sober and well-advised Religion. So that if you now apostatize, you will not only affront your Conscience, but your Experience too ; and the past Sense you have had of the Goodness of Religion, will rise up in Judgment against ye, and for ever silence all the Excuses you can urge for yourselves, and leave ye nothing to say, but that you were sick of your Ease, and tired with the Refreshments of Religion. But then

Thirdly, as your Apostacy will be a grievous Affront to the Spirit of God, and to your own Conscience and Experience, so it will be one of the foulest Dishonours that you can cast upon Religion. If you had never been engaged in the Christian Warfare, the Honour of Religion could never have been so nearly touched by your wicked Courses, and all considering Men would have attributed your Enmity to it, to your Ignorance and want of Experience, and never have thought the worse of it when they saw it so contemptuously treated by one that was never acquainted with it. But if now you revolt into wicked Courses after you have made Trial of it, what will the World say? Look ye, here is one that hath made an Experiment of the Religion you so much celebrate, and which you extol and cry up for such a pleasant and amiable thing; if it were what you pretend, how comes it to pass that after so long Trial and Experience of it, this Man should now at last renounce and forsake it? Which is such an Objection, as can be no otherwise solved but by demonstrating the Man whose Apostacy started it, to be forsaken and abandoned of his Reason. For if upon the Trial he hath made of Religion, he had experienced it to be that good and grateful thing it is represented, it is not to be imagined he would ever have revolted from it, had he been capable to deliberate of his own Choices and Actions. And how can they that are Strangers to Religion forbear suspecting the Goodness of it, when they see a Man, after Trial, and in his right Senses, declare by his Actions that Vice is better and more eligible than Virtue, and do behold the Pleasures of Sin preferred before
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the Joys and Satisfactions of Religion, by one that hath made a thorough Experiment of them both? So that by apostatizing into sinful Courses after a thorough Trial of Religion, we take an effectual Course to defame and scandalize it, to render it *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence* to those that have had but little or no Acquaintance with it; and if by our Example any should be disheartened either from entering into, or proceeding in the Christian Warfare, their Blood will be one day required at our Hands, and so we shall raise a most fearful Cry upon ourselves, and have not only the Spirit of God and our own Conscience and Experience, but also the Blood of all those Souls who have stumbled at our Apostacy lifting up their Cries together to the Tribunal of God for a dire and speedy Vengeance against us.

VI. Consider, if after you have made some Progress in Religion you revolt into sinful Courses; you will not only render your selves for the present more guilty, but, as a Consequence of that, you will certainly expose yourselves, if you die before your Recovery, to a deeper and more dreadful Ruin. For this we may depend upon, that the Judge of all the World will do righteously, and consequently, that as on the one hand he will proportion his Rewards to our Services, so on the other he will measure his Punishments by our Guilts and Demerits; and if he thus proceed (as he most certainly will) how horrible is it to think of the black and dismal Fate that hangs over the Heads of Apostates, whose Guilt being aggravated by those above-named Circumstances to such a

prodigious Bulk and Magnitude, must be supposed to draw after it a Punishment proportionable? and if so, then doubtless the Portion of Apostates among wicked and miserable Spirits will be the most wretched and deplorable. For besides those supernumerary Stripes they must expect to receive from God, as being Servants that have known their Master's Will, and experienced the Goodness of it, and yet have finally refused to comply with it; their Reflections on their own Apostacy, and the Folly and Madness of it will doubtless gall and torment them a thousand times more than all the other Stings of their Conscience together. For how must it enrage them against themselves, to ruminate on their own Follies, as they are wandering through the Infernal Shades! O desperate Creatures! from what glorious Hopes have we precipitated ourselves into this dismal State! We had once got a fair way onwards to Heaven. and were arrived within Sight of its blessed Shores: we had shaken off our Lusts, mastered our Inclinations, and subdued our Wills to the Will of God; and in so doing had conquered the most difficult part of our Voyage; we had weathered the cross Winds of Temptation from without, and stem'd the Tide of corrupt Nature within, so that had we but bore up courageously a little farther, we that are now howling among damned Ghosts, might have been triumphing with blessed Spirits. But O abominable Fools and Traitors to ourselves! after all the successful Pains we had taken to be happy, we have shipwrecked our Souls at the Mouth of our Harbour; and to gratify a base Lust, have leapt headlong from the Brinks of the *Rivers of Pleasure*,
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into this *Lake of Fire and Brimstone*. And have we thus undone ourselves, thus madly, thus without Pretence or Temptation ! O ! cursed be our Folly, cursed be our Lusts, and for ever cursed be we for harbouring and entertaining them ! Thus will these miserable People incessantly rave against themselves, and with dire Reflections on their desperate Follies for ever enrage and multiply their own Torments. So that were I descending to the bottomless Pit, and had but so much Time before I came there, as to make one Prayer more in my own Behalf, next to that of being wholly delivered thence, I know none I should sooner pitch upon, than this, *O Lord deliver me from that Portion of Hell, which thou hast reserved for Apostates*.

So that if now, that we have so far engaged ourselves in the Christian Warfare, we should be so mad as to retreat into our own sinful Courses, it had been a thousand times better for us that we had never engaged in it at all. For unless we repent of our Retreat, and come on again, we have taken a great deal of Pains in Religion to no other Purpose, but only *to treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath*, and heat the Furnace of our future Torments yet *seven times hotter*. Wherefore since the Matter is now reduced to this Issue, that if we revolt from our Christian Warfare we shall not only defeat ourselves of all the Fruit of our past Labour and Contentions, but also inance our future Punishment ; so that we must either resolve to win Heaven by our Perseverance, or sink ourselves into the nethermost Hell by our Apostacy ; let us pull up our Courage, and maugre all Temptations to the contrary, continue steadfast

and immovable in our Christian Resolution, remembering what the *Captain of our Salvation*, hath promised, *Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcomes, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am sate down with my Father in his Throne.*

CH A P. V.

Containing some short Directions for the more profitable reading the preceding Discourse, and also for the Conduct and regular Exercise of our Closet Religion in all the different States of the Christian Life; together with Forms of private Devotion fitted to each State.

IN the foregoing Chapter I have endeavoured a full Account of all those *instrumental Duties* of Christianity by which we are to acquire, improve, and perfect the principal Virtues of it, in the Perfection of which Virtues, Heaven, which is the great End of Christianity, consists. And for the more distinct Management thereof, I considered Men under a threefold State; First, as entering into the Christian Life; Secondly, as actually engaged in the Course of it; Thirdly, as improving towards Perfection by Perseverance in it; and gave a distinct account of all those *Instrumental Duties* that are proper to each of these States. And now that what hath been said in
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that and the preceding Chapters may have its due Effect upon the Reader's Mind, I have thought fit to reduce it to Practice by directing Men,

First, How to read and apply the several parts of it to their own particular States ;

Secondly, By furnishing them with some short Rules for the more profitable Exercise of their private Religion in each of those different States, together with Forms of private Devotion fitted to each State.

I. As to the first of these, it is to be considered, that to the making Men sincere and hearty Christians, it is highly necessary that they should have a right understanding, First, of the Nature of the great and chief End which Christianity proposes to them ; Secondly, of the Means by which that End is to be obtained ; Thirdly, of the natural Tendency of all the Virtues of Christianity towards this blessed End, and of the contrary Tendency of the opposite Vices towards their eternal Misery and Ruin. Of all which I have endeavoured to give an Account in the three first Chapters of this Book. Wherefore I would advise the Reader,

1. Carefully and seriously to peruse those Chapters wherein (because I have been sometimes forced by the Sublimity of my Argument to discourse a little more abstrusely than in any of the following Parts) it will be necessary for him to employ more of his Thoughts and Consideration, and not to content himself with a slight and cursory Perusal. And when by a serious Consideration of what hath been there discoursed, his Mind is
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fully convinced what a kind of Heaven he is to expect hereafter, what kinds of Means are necessary to obtain it, how naturally all the Virtues of Religion do raise up Mens Souls to Heaven, and how all the contrary Vices do as naturally sink and press them down to Hell, it is to be hoped he will be fully persuaded of the indispensable Necessity of entering into the Christian Life ; which if he be, I would advise him,

2. Seriously to read over and consider the first and second Sections of the fourth Chapter, wherein are contained the several Duties which are proper to his State of Entrance into the Christian Life, and also proper Arguments and Motives to engage him to the Practice of them ; which if he would read to good Effect, he must by no means content himself with a single Perusal, but read them over at least once a Week whilst he continues in that State, till he fully comprehends the Meaning and Use of all those Duties, and the Force and Cogency of those Arguments ; which if he do, it is to be hoped he will at last be reduced to a thorough and well-weighed Resolution of forsaking his Sins and actually engaging in the Christian Life. Which being done I would advise him,

3. With the same Care and Frequency to peruse the third and fourth Sections of the fourth Chapter, wherein are contained all the several Duties proper to this second State of actual Engagement in the Christian Life, as also sundry Arguments or Motives to press and inforce them ; and when by the Assistance of these Duties he hath continued for some time faithful and constant to his good Resolution,

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4. Together with the third and fourth Section, let him often peruse and consider the fifth and sixth, wherein are contained the Duties appertaining to the third State of Improvement and Perseverance in the Christian Life, together with some Considerations to enforce the Practice of them. All which I would earnestly persuade the pious Reader to read and consider over and over again, till his Mind is fully instructed in the Nature and Use of each Duty, and hath thoroughly digested the Force and Evidence of every Argument. And this may suffice for the first thing proposed concerning the profitable Method of reading this practical Treatise.

II. As for the second Part of it, which is that which I mainly design in this Chapter, *viz.* the *Rules and Directions* for the private Exercise of our Religion in each State of the *Christian Life*, together with the *Forms of private Prayer* fitted for each, take them in their following Order.

Directions for the more profitable Exercise of our private Religion in the State of our Entrance into the Christian Life.

In the *Morning* before you go into the World, enter into your Closet, and there consider with your self a while the miserable State you have reduced your self to by your past sinful Courses, the absolute Necessity of your forsaking them, and the Possibility of your Recovery, if you heartily

heartily endeavour it ; and then address yourself to God in this following *Prayer*.

O Most glorious and eternal God, thou art the Fountain of Beings, the Father of Angels and Men, the righteous and almighty Governor of Heaven and Earth ; from thy Throne thou beholdest all the Children of Men, and their most secret Actions are open and naked to thy all-seeing Eye ; and such is the Purity of thy Nature that thou lovest Righteousness and hatest Iniquity wheresoever thou beholdest it ; with what Face then can I, a most miserable polluted Wretch, appear in thy Presence, who by the past course of my Wickedness and Rebellion against thee, have not only rendered myself guilty and justly obnoxious to thy eternal Displeasure, but have also contracted such obstinate Dispositions and Inclinations to sin on, as without thy Grace and Assistance I shall never be able to conquer ! O desperate, vile, and ungrateful Wretch that I have been ! I have renounced the God of my Being, and the Fountain of my Mercies ; I have despised thy Goodness, trampled upon thy Authority, mock'd and abus'd thy Patience and Long-suffering, and in particular I must confess, to my own Shame and Confusion, I have been wofully guilty of *. And now by these my manifold Abominations I have utterly undone myself, unless thou take pity upon me. I confess I have forfeited my Soul into thy Hands, and if thou so pleatest thou mayest justly cast me away from thy Presence, and make me a dire Example of thy Vengeance for

* Here make a particular Confession of those sinful Courses you have lived in, together with all their aggravating Circumstances of Impudence, Obstinacy, and Ingratitude, &c.

ever. But I know, O Lord that thou desirest not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, and upon the Propitiation of thine own Son's Blood, thou hast declared thyself willing to receive returning Prodigals, and to be heartily reconciled to them, notwithstanding all their past Provocations. O that I could return, that I could but shake off those corrupt Inclinations which detain my wretched Soul in Captivity! I am willing to contribute towards it whatsoever I am able, but alas without thee all that I can do will be utterly ineffectual. Wherefore for thy tender Mercy's sake, for thy dear Son's and my Saviour's sake, have pity upon a miserable Wretch, that without thy helping hand is lost for ever. And since thou hast given me thy Gospel as an outward means to save and recover me, O do thou enable me by thy blessed Spirit heartily to believe, and thoroughly to consider it. For which end I beseech thee to remove all sinful Prejudices from my Mind, that so I may impartially weigh those Evidences thou hast given me of the Truth of it; and do thou suggest them to my Mind with such a clear and convincing Light, as that they may at last conquer my Infidelity, and beget in me a firm and lively Faith. And forasmuch as my Mind is vain and roving, and utterly averse to all serious Considerations, O do thou, who art the Father of Spirits, and canst turn the Hearts of Men which way thou pleasest, inspire good Thoughts to me, and imprint them upon me with such a Power and Efficacy, as that my wandring Mind may be reduced by them to a thorough Consideration, and my stubborn Will to a firm Resolution of Amendment. Particularly, I beseech thee too give me a right understanding of the urgent need I have of a Saviour, and of all those things which he hath done and suffered,

suffered, and is still doing at thy right Hand in order to the cleansing my guilty and polluted Nature, and restoring me to thy Grace and Favour ; that so hereby I may be fully convinced how odious my Sins are in thy sight, how base and vile they have rendered me, and at what a mighty Distance they have set me from thee, and that being convinced of this, I may put on a holy Shame and Confusion, and abhor myself in dust and ashes before thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, it is not in my power to soften this hard and unrelenting Heart, and affect it with that Godly Sorrow which is requisite to work a true Repentance. O do thou smite it with such a sharp and piercing sense of my Sins, as may cause the floods of unfeigned Grief and Contrition to gush forth from it. Cause me to bleed for my Sins now, that I may not bleed for them for ever ; and that having felt the Smart and Anguish of them, I may utterly detest and abhor them, and never be reconciled to them more. Thus do thou assist me, O good God, in the Exercise of all these Duties, till thou hast thoroughly conquered my Will by them, and prepared it for a firm Resolution to forsake all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World. And now that I am going into the World among those very Temptations that have hitherto so miserably captivated and enslaved me, O let thy blessed Spirit be present with me to keep my drowsy Conscience awake, and arm me against them with his holy Inspirations, that so those good Thoughts and Desires which thou hast at present excited in me, may stick fast upon my Soul in the midst of my worldly Occasions, and never cease importuning my Conscience, Will, and Affections, till they have produced in me the happy Effect of a serious and hearty Repentance. All which
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I most earnestly beseech of thee even for pity sake to a poor perishing Soul, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Words I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening* when you find yourself most fit for serious Thoughts, go into your Closet again, and consider coolly with yourself, whether you are heartily willing to part with every Sin, and particularly with your beloved Sin, and to submit to every Duty, and even to those that are most contrary to your vicious Inclination; if you are not (as it is very probable you will not for some time) or if you find the least reason to suspect you are not, press yourself anew with such divine Reasons as are most apt to affect you, with the Hope of Heaven, and the Fear of Hell, with the Love of God and of your Saviour; represent your Obstinacy to yourself with all its Baseness and Disingenuity, Madness and Folly, till you find yourself affected with a sorrowful Sense of it, and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O *Father of Mercies, and God of all Grace and Consolation, who art a ready help in time of need, look down upon me, I beseech thee, a miserable and forlorn Wretch, that have wilfully sold myself Captive to the Devil, and am now struggling to get loose from this my wretched Bondage into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. I know, O Lord, that I am striving for my immortal Life, and accordingly as I succeed, I expect to be happy or miserable for ever. I have seriously considered the Reasons on both sides,*

and am fully satisfied in my Mind that there is infinitely more Force in thy Promises and Threats, than in all the Difficulties of my Duty and the Pleasures of my Sin. But after all this, I find a Law in my Members warring against the Law in my Mind, a perverse Will that rejects the Counsels of my Reason, that makes obstinate Reservations of some beloved Sins, and Exceptions to some particular Duties, in despite of all the persuasion of my Reason and Religion. So that after all my Endeavours I am still detained in Captivity to the law of Sin that is in my Members, and am not able to incline myself to an entire Resolution of Amendment. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Sin and Death! I know, O Lord, though I am weak and impotent, and of myself unable to shake off the Chains and Fetters of my Lusts, yet thy Grace is abundantly sufficient to rescue and deliver me from them; and thou hast promised to assist with it my honest Endeavours, and crown them with a blessed Success. Wherefore for thy Truth and Mercy's sake suffer not thy poor Creature, who with pitiful and bemoaning Looks cries out for help to thee, to spend himself in weary and fruitless Strugglings against this violent Torrent of my sinful Nature, which without thy Aid will quickly overcome my poor Endeavours, and drive me down into eternal Perdition. My sole Dependance is upon thee, my Hope of Success is wholly in thee; help, Lord, help, or else I perish; stretch forth thy powerful Arm to my sinking Soul, and let not this Deep swallow me up; but do thou so quicken my faint Endeavours, so strengthen my weak and doubting Faith, so enliven my cold and languid Considerations, so clear up my Convictions of my need of a Saviour and of
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the Danger and Odiousness of my Sins, and thereby so increase my penitential Sorrows and Remorses, as that by all these means together my obstinate Will may at last be conquered, and effectually persuaded to part with every Sin, be it never so dear to me, and to comply with every Duty, be it never so cross to my vile Inclination. Then shall I freely resign up my self unto thee, and with a firm Resolution devote all my Powers to thy Service, And that I may do so, and by so doing be reconciled to thee, O my offended God, before I go hence and be no more seen, receive me, I beseech thee, into thy Protection this Night, that I may yet see the Light of another Day, and have a longer space to finish my Repentance. All which I humbly implore even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Words I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

If upon searching your own Heart, you find that after you have fairly represented to yourself what sinful Pleasures you must part with, what Duties you must submit to, and what Difficulties you must engage with, you are willing without any Reserve or Exception to submit yourself to God, beware you be not too hasty to form your *Resolutions*, but take some little time to try yourself; see whether you will continue to morrow of the same Mind you are in now, and if then you perceive you have reason to suspect yourself; try a little longer, and at the present endeavour as much as in you lies to confirm and settle yourself in the good Mind you are in, by pressing and urging yourself with all those Arguments of your Religion by which you have been thus far convinced and persuaded;

ded ; and while you are thus trying yourself instead of the former, let this be your *Evening Prayer*.

O Blessed Lord and most merciful Father, thou art a God hearing Prayer, and to thee shall all Flesh come ; I admire thy Goodness, I adore thy Grace, that after so many heinous Provocations I have given thee, for which thou mightest have justly shut thine Ears against me for ever, thou hast heard my Cries and pitied my Misery, and thus far contributed towards my Recovery. I acknowledge it is by thy Grace that I am what I am, that this stubborn Heart begins at last to relent, this perverse Will to bow and stoop, these lewd Affections to hunger and thirst after Righteousness ; that now at last my foolish Soul is persuaded to part with those Sins which are its Plagues and Infelicities, and to embrace those blessed Duties by which thou hast designed to raise me to immortal Glory. By these good Beginnings thou hast given me some Reason to hope for a happy Success upon my poor Endeavours. Praised be thy Grace, I am at present heartily willing to be thine, and were I but sure to continue thus minded and disposed, I would immediately make over my Heart and Will to thee by the most solemn Engagement. But, O Lord, I am afraid of myself, I dread my own Inconstancy, and thou knowest I have too much Reason for it. I have mocked thee too often already with my deceitful Promises, and Engagements, I have sinned and then promised Amendment, I have promised Amendment and then sinned again, as if all that I meant by my Promises, were only to ask leave of thee to sin against thee anew : And now after so many Falsifications, I would not for all
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the World deal treacherously with thee any more ; wherefore before I solemnly resign and devote my self to thee by a new Purpose and Engagement, I desire to make some farther Trial of my own Stedfastness, to see whether this present Inclination of my Will be the effect of Passion or a settled Judgment. In the mean time therefore I do most humbly beseech thee to be present with me in all my ways, and continually to influence my Mind with thy Grace and Spirit ; to strengthen my Faith, to fix my Consideration, to persuade my Will, and feed and cherish these my holy Desires with good Thoughts and Inspirations, that so I may remain stedfast and immoveable, and no Temptation whatsoever may be able to alter the Temper of my Mind, or divert it from its good Inclination ; and that having had a sufficient Experience of the fixed Disposition of my Soul to obey thee. I may devote my self to thee with a chearful Heart, and an assured Hope of my own Sincerity and Constancy, O Lord hear and help me for thy Mercy's sake, and for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose most perfect Form of Prayer I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

If after a sufficient Trial of yourself, you find you are constantly inclined to submit to God, to part with every Sin, and comply with every Duty, consider that now it is high time for you to devote yourself to God, and what abundant Reason you have for it, and what a powerful Obligation you must lay upon your self by so doing ; and when you have seriously considered these things, give up your self to God in this following *Form of Prayer* ; which for the greater *Sanction* and more awful *Solemnity* of

your good Resolution, you would do well to repeat at the next Sacrament.

O Most merciful Father, so infinite is the Goodness of thy Nature, that thou art always ready to pity and relieve the poor and needy, and to extend thy timely Succours to us helpless Sinners whensoever we cry unto thee. Of the Truth whereof thou hast given me, who am the vilest of Sinners, a most sensible Proof and Experiment. For not long ago I was so dead in Trespases and Sins, that hadst not thou took pity upon me, and quickned me by thy Grace, I had died for ever; my Understanding was so blind that I saw not my Danger, my Conscience so scared that I felt not my Guilt, my Will so enslaved to my Lusts that I could not endure to think of parting with them; but now, blessed be thy Grace which first excited my Endeavours, and hath hitherto prospered them, I do not only see the Danger my Sins have exposed me to, and sensibly feel the Guilt of them, but am freely willing to renounce them for ever, and to part even with those darling Lusts that have heretofore been as dear to me as my right Eye. And now, O Lord, I am come before thee, and I hope with a truly loyal and sincere Heart to offer up my Soul and Body to thee, and vow an everlasting Obedience to thy blessed Will. For Jesus sake refuse not this poor Oblation, which though it be infinitely unworthy of thine Acceptance, is the best thing I am able to present thee. To thee, O glorious Trinity, Father, Son an Holy Ghost, I do from henceforth eternally devote myself and all my Faculties. [* And here at the Table of my blessed Saviour, and upon these sacred Memorials of

* When you renew your Vow in the Sacrament add.

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his Wounds and Blood.] *I utterly abjure all known and wilful Sins and Rebellions, and particularly, all such as have been heretofore most dear to me ; faithfully promising by thy gracious Assistance from henceforth to observe thy Law without any Reserve or Exception. This in the Sincerity of my Soul I do here vow to thy Divine Majesty, and however I may be hereafter tempted, I will never wilfully depart from it, or from any Part of it ; so help me, O my God, for Jesus Christ his sake in whose own Words I farther pray, &c.*

Directions for the more profitable Exercise of our Private Religion in the State of our actual Engagement in the Christian Life.

When you go into your Closet in the *Morning*, consider seriously with yourself the solemn Engagement you lie under ; what a crying Guilt it would be to violate it, what Madness and Folly to recede from it, after you have taken so much pains to reduce yourself to it, what mighty Reasons you have to persist in it, and what powerful Assistance is promised you, if you be not wanting to yourself ; and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O *Eternal God, who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and dost through him bestow so many good and perfect Gifts upon thy Creatures, I desire for ever to remember and adore thy Goodness towards me, whom thou hast snatched as a Firebrand out of*

the Fire, and at length reduced to a serious Purpose of Amendment after a long and obstinate course of Disobedience, in which if I had still persisted I must have perished everlastingly. O blessed be thy great Name, that after so many Years Rebellion against thee, for which I have long ago deserved to be banished into utter Darkness, I do yet behold the Light of another Day, and am allowed a farther Space to repent and execute my purpose of Amendment. And now, O Lord, as thou hast wrought my Will into a good Resolution in despite of all the corrupt Inclinations of my Nature, leave not, I beseech thee, thy Workmanship unfinished, but by the mighty Operation of thy Grace excite and enable me faithfully to perform what I have so seriously resolved. It is a mighty Work that I have undertaken, to cleanse a base polluted Nature, and root up all its filthy Lusts and Affections, and plant it with all the heavenly Dispositions, and improve them into everlasting Happiness, and thou knowest what strong Oppositions will be made against me, and with what powerful Temptations I must struggle throughout the whole Course of my future Endeavour. So that unless thou wilt still go along with me, and still quicken and animate me by thy blessed Spirit, my Work is so great, and my Strength so little, that it will be in vain for me to proceed any farther. These importunate Temptations that surround me will quickly conquer my present Resolution, and I shall do, as I have too often done already, resolve and sin, and sin and resolve, and so increase my Guilt by the Treachery of my Vows and Engagements. Wherefore for Jesus Christ his sake, withdraw not thy self from me, but continue to assist my weak Endeavours by thy powerful Grace, till thou hast crowned them with a perfect

perfect Victory. For which End, I beseech thee, inspire me more and more with Patience and Constancy of Mind, that I may stand fast in my good Resolution in despite of all Temptations, to the contrary. Suggest to my Mind those holy Examples thou hast set before me, especially that of my blessed Saviour, and incline my Heart to copy and imitate them. Direct me to some wise and faithful Guide, that may be willing and able to assist me in all my spiritual Necessities; and by frequently exciting me to dedicate my Actions to thee, do thou purify my Intentions from sinful and from carnal Aims, that so I may always live to thy Glory. And since thou art present with me where-ever I am, and dost always behold me whatsoever I am doing, O do thou inspire me with such a strong continual and actual Sense of it, as may be a constant Check to my sinful Inclinations, and render me afraid of offending thee. Let thy blessed Spirit by my constant Monitor, to put me in Mind to consider my Ways, and frequently to examine my Actions, that so whenever I go astray I may be immediately convinced of it, and by my speedy Repentance recover myself before I have wandered too far from my Duty. And grant, I beseech thee, that the sense of my past Failings may still render me more watchful and circumspect for the future; that whensoever I have been carelessly or wilfully faulty, I may from thenceforth be more cautious of my Actions, and more vigilant against the Temptations that betrayed me. And that I may not run myself unnecessarily into Temptation for the future, preserve me, O Lord, from Sloth and Idleness, and from intermedling with matters that do not belong to me, and do thou still put me in mind to do my own Business, and to be faithful and diligent in the State and Calling

wherein thou hast placed me. And that I may always serve thee with Freedom and Alacrity, remove from me, I beseech thee, all unprofitable Sadness and Melancholy, and help me to acquire an equal Tranquillity of Mind, and a becoming Chearfulness of Spirit. For which end, Good Lord, do thou inspire me with a lively Sense and earnest Expectation of that blissful State towards which I am travelling; that having this glorious Prospect always in my Eye, I may go on with Joy, and triumph over all the Difficulties and Temptations that oppose me. And that by all these means I may be more and more strengthened and confirmed in the good Resolution I have made, do thou stir up my slothful Mind to a diligent Attendance on thy publick Ordinances, that so in the solemn Assemblies of thy Saints, I may constantly hear the Word with Reverence and Attention, offer up my Prayers with Fervency and Devotion, and approach thy Table with all that Humility and Love, Gratitude and Resignation of Soul that becomes this solemn Remembrance and Representation of my dying Saviour. In these things, and whatsoever else is needful to secure my Resolution of Obedience, assist me, O Lord, for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thyself and eternal Spirit be rendered all Honour, Glory and Power, from this time forth for evermore.

After this Prayer bethink yourself a little what Temptations you are like to meet with in the ensuing Business of the Day, and briefly recollect those powerful Arguments which the Gospel urges to fortify you against them, and apply them particularly to the Sin or Sins you are most inclined to, and then renew
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your Resolution to God in the following Prayer.

O God, who art my Hope and Strength, upon whose Aid and Assistance I depend, look down, I beseech thee, upon a poor helpless Creature, who am going forth into a busy World, that is full of Snares and Temptations. Blessed be thy Name, my Heart continues still resolved upon a thorough Course of Amendment; and therefore here in thy dreadful Presence I do again most solemnly promise and engage myself, that whatsoever Temptations I meet with this Day, I will not wilfully commit any Sin, no not the Sin I am most inclined to; nor omit any Duty, how contrary soever it may be to my Nature, and that I will faithfully endeavour to keep such a constant Guard upon myself, as that I may not be surprised and overtaken through my own Inadvertence and Unwariness, But this, O Lord, I promise not out of any Confidence in my own Strength, but in Dependence upon thee, and in Hope that out of thy tender Pity to a poor impotent Wretch, thou wilt not be wanting to me in any necessary Assistance, but that either thou wilt remove from me all great and importunate Temptations, or enable me by thy Grace to repel and vanquish them; and this I do most earnestly beseech, in the Name and Mediation of Jesus Christ, with whose Prayer I conclude this my Morning Sacrifice. Our Father, &c.

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In the *Evening* when you find yourself best disposed for religious Exercise, set apart such Portions of your Time as you can conveniently spare from your necessary Refreshment and Diversion, to call yourself to Account concerning the Actions of the Day ; and enquire whether they have been agreeable to your Morning Promise and Resolution ; and upon Enquiry you will find either that you have *faithfully discharged* what you promised, or that you have sinned *unawares*, or through *Carelessness* and *Self-neglect*, or that you have sinned *wilfully* and against your own *Conscience*.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have been *faithful* to your Morning Engagement, represent to yourself the great Reason you have to rejoice in it, and to praise God for it, and then offer up this following *Thanksgiving*.

Blessed be thy Name, O most gracious and merciful Father, for those great and numberless Favours which from time to time thou hast heaped upon me, who am less than the least of thy Mercies ; particularly, for the signal Mercies of this Day, for that thou hast not shut thine Ears against my Prayers, nor withdrawn thyself from me, but hast accompanied me with thy Grace through all those Snares and Temptations to which I have been exposed. Praised be thy name, that thou hast not suffered me to be tempted above what I was able, that thou hast so powerfully assisted me against those Temptations I have been engaged with, and by putting so many good Thoughts into my Mind, hast strengthened my Resolution

lution, and rendered it so successful and victorious. It is to thy Grace that I owe all thee good I have done, and it is by thy Aid that I have escaped all the Evils I have been tempted to; wherefore not unto me, O Lord, not unto my Strength or Endeavours, but unto thy Name be all the Glory and Praise of this Day's Deliverance and Preservation, O never let the Remembrance of this thy Goodness towards me depart from my Mind, but let it kindle in me such a grateful Sense, as may more and more incite me to love and obey thee, and depend upon thee for the future. And as thou hast been pleased to conduct me safely by thy Grace through all the Dangers and Temptations of the Day, so do thou take me into thy Care and Protection this Night, and grant that I may awake in the Morning with a Heart so inflamed with the Remembrance of thy Goodness, and so encouraged with this Day's Success, and so endeared to the Practice of Virtue by the growing Delights and Pleasures of it, as that I may persist in my religious Course with greater Courage and Alacrity; and this I humbly beg for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose Name and Words I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry you find that you have been failing in your Duty, or that you have done any evil Action through meer *Heedlesness* or *Surprize*, endeavour to affect your self with a sorrowful Sense of your own Folly, Weakness, and Carelesness, and then conclude with this *Form of Humiliation*.

O Most blessed Lord God, who art infinitely glorious in thy own Righteousness and Holiness, and dost

dost for ever will and act according to thy own Nature, which is the most perfect Law and Pattern of Goodness. To thy spotless Nature no Evil can approach, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity ; with what Confidence then can such a polluted Creature as I am appear in thy Presence, how can I lift up my guilty Eyes to thy Throne, who to my past rebellions, which have been more in Number than the Hairs on my Head, have thus added so many sinful Failings and Defects that, shouldst thou be severe to mark what I do amiss, were sufficient to kindle thy Displeasure against me ! It was but this Morning that I engaged myself to thee not only to abstain from all wilful and deliberate Sins, but also to set a Watch upon my Mouth and Actions that I might not offend thee unawares ; but to my Shame I must acknowledge, I have been wofully careless and remiss, having this Day suffered myself through my own Inadvertency to be surprised into such Actions as nothing can render pitiable or excusable in thy Sight but the miserable Frailty and Weakness of my Nature. What shall I say unto thee, O thou Judge of all the Earth ! I am guilty, I am guilty, and have nothing to plead for myself but the Blood of Jesus, that all-sufficient Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. O Lord, I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my Misdoings, the Remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the Burthen of them is intolerable ; have Mercy upon me, have Mercy upon me, most merciful Father, and for Jesus Christ his sake forgive me all that is past, and grant that the Sense of these my Miscarriages may render me more careful and vigilant for the future. And let thy blessed Spirit be always present with my Mind, to recollect my Distractions, and awake my Considerations, and warn me of my

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Dangers, that I may no more be surpris'd by sudden Temptations, nor hurried into evil Actions by unexpected Hopes or Fears; but do thou so subdue my lower Appetites to my Will, my Will to my Understanding, and my Understanding to thy Spirit, as that under his blessed Conduet I may for the future be prepared against all Temptations, and furnished to every good Work. And now, O Lord, let not the Failings I have been guilty of this Day, deprive me of thy gracious Protection this Night, but grant that after a safe and comfortable Repose, I may awake in the Morning with such a sorrowful Sense of them, as may for the future oblige me to be more watchful and resolute against them. All which I beg for Jesus Christ his sake, with whose Prayer I conclude this my Evening Sacrifice. Our Father, &c.

If upon Enquiry it appear that you have committed any wilful, deliberate Sin, endeavour to affect yourself with Horror, Shame and Compunction for it, by representing to your Conscience, the monstrous Foulness and Ingratitude, the deep Malignity and desperate Madness of your own Action; and then conclude with this *Form of particular Repentance*.

O Thou most dreadful Majesty of Heaven and Earth, who hatest Iniquity, and hast proclaimed from Heaven thy fierce Indignation against all Unrighteousness and Ungodliness of Men, look down, I beseech thee, upon me a vile and guilty Wretch, who stand here arraigned at thy Tribunal by my own Conscience, and am so confounded with the sense of my Sin, and of thy just Displeasure against me, that I
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tremble to draw near unto thee, and yet I dare not stay from thee. I acknowledge myself unworthy, infinitely unworthy, to come before thee, and am prompted by my own Horror and Shame to bide my self from thee, but yet I know I must come or I must perish, And therefore here, O Lord, I cast my self at thy Feet, and if thou shalt think meet to tread upon me, and to spurn me from thy Presence for ever, I must own that thou art just and righteous in all thy Ways. For thou hast been wonderfully good beyond what I could modestly have wished, or am able to express; thou tookest pity upon me when I was all wounded and polluted, and weltring in my Blood, when I was sleeping securely upon the Brink of Perdition, and had scarce any Sense or Feeling of my Guilt and Misery; in this woful plight didst thou visit my poor Soul, and with thy preventing Grace awake me to a sense of my Danger, and effectually warn me to flee from the Wrath to come. And now when thou hadst brought me to my self, and to a thorough Resolution of Amendment, and my Soul was in a fair way of Recovery, like an ungrateful Wretch as I am, I have flown in the Face of my Physician, I have abused his Goodness, and baffled his Grace, and wilfully and deliberately torn open my Wounds again. And this I have done most treacherously, as well as ungratefully, not only against all the Obligations of thy Goodness, but also against my own repeated Vows and Engagements. For it was but this Morning that I solemnly renewed to thee my Promise of Obedience, and therein vowed not to offend thee wilfully upon any Temptation whatsoever; but O vile Traitor that I am, both to thee and to my own Soul, I have hereby

by * moſt baſely falſified this my Engagement ; and this I did with the moſt unpardonable Circumſtance, even againſt the Diſſuaſions of thy Grace, the Checks of my Conſcience, and the faireſt Warnings of my Danger. Had I done it ignorantly, or unawares, or under a Surprize, it had been pitiable ; but, O my Guilt, my Guilt, it was knowingly, wilfully, baſely, and maliciously that I did this Evil in thy ſight ; whereby I have forfeited my Soul, my Innocence and thy Love, and have got nothing in exchange but the Pleaſure of a Minute, and a laſting Shame and Repentance. O vile Wretch, O deſperate Fool that I am, what have I done ? whither am I fallen ! I have grieved thy Spirit, contemned thy Authority, trampled on thy Goodneſs, and wounded my own Conſcience, and by one baſe Act have thrown my ſelf headlong from all thoſe glorious Hopes whercunto thou haſt raiſed me. And now, O God, what can I ſay in my own behalf, my Sin being great, my Folly ſo utterly inexcusable ! O I am aſhamed, I am aſhamed of myſelf, I lament and abhor the Madneſs and Wickedneſs of my own Choice ; and O that it were in my Power to recal it ! But woe is me it is paſt into Act, and by that Act my Innocence is already ſtained, my Soul forfeited, and it is no more in my Power to undo what I have done, than to recal the Hours of yeſterday. What then ſhall I do, or whither ſhall I turn myſelf ! It is againſt thee, O Lord, againſt thee I have ſinned, and now I have none but thee to flee to. I have nothing of my own to plead in my own behalf, my Conſcience condemns me, and my Sin, my Sin, cries aloud againſt me, ſo that unleſs thou wilt be pleaſed to liſten to the interceding

* Here name the ſinful Act you have committed.

Blood of thy Son, and to consult thine own Bowels and Compassions, and from thence to fetch Arguments of Mercy, I am undone for ever by my own Folly. Wherefore for Jesus Christ his sake, for thy own Goodness and Mercy's sake, have Pity, have Pity upon me, heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee; be merciful to my Sin for it is great. Thou hast promised to receive returning Sinners, to blot out their Iniquities, and to heal their Backslidings. I desire, O Lord, to return unto thee, I hate and renounce my Sin, and do here abhor myself in Dust and Ashes before thee. Wherefore for thy Pity sake, O try me this once more, and do not presently cast me away from thy Presence, nor take thy holy Spirit from me, but restrain me by his Grace from all presumptuous Sins, and suffer them not to have Dominion over me. And quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's sake, that for the future I may watch more carefully, resist more vigorously, and walk more circumspectly than I have hitherto done. And that from henceforth I may be intirely devoted to thee, and serve thee without Interruption, do thou so confirm me by thy Grace in my holy Resolution, as that I may choose rather to die than to offend thee any more. And, now O Lord, though by my Rebellion against thee this Day, I have rendered myself most unworthy of thy Fatherly Care and Protection, yet I beseech thee to watch over me this Night for good, and give me a safe Repose in the Arms of thy Providence, that I may have yet a farther Space to repent of mine Iniquity. And grant, I beseech thee, that when I awake in the Morning, I may be warned by the woful Remembrance of this Day's Fall, to take more Care of my Steps, and to shun or refuse those Snares and Temptations that lie

lie all a-round me, All which I do most humbly and earnestly beg of thee, even for Jesus Christ his sake in whose Name and Words I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

Directions for the Exercise of our private Religion in the state of our Progress and Improvement in the Christian Life, with Forms of private Devotion fitted for this State.

When you enter into your Closet in the *Morning*, endeavour to affect yourself with Gratitude and Thankfulness to God for his Grace, by representing to yourself the Danger and Misery of that sinful State out of which you are recovered, and the great Incapacity you were in to recover without his Assistance ; and then make this *thankful Acknowledgment* to him him.

O Most gracious and most merciful Father, thou art a liberal Benefactor to thy Creation. a never failing Friend to Mankind, and a most tender Lover of Souls, for whose everlasting Welfare thou hast been always consulting, and hast left no Method of Love unattempted, to rescue them from Sin and Misery. O blessed, for ever blessed, be thy great Name for the Experience I have had of this thy fatherly Goodness. I am a Monument of thy Goodness, a living Instance and Wonder of thy Mercy, for me hast thou quickened who was dead in Trespasses and Sins, and who had long ago perished in mine Iniquities, hadst

hadst thou not been infinitely patient and long-suffering. I had forfeited my Soul to thee, and thou mightest justly have cut me off, and given me my Portion with Hypocrites, and, considering how I provoked thee to it by my daily Rebellions, I cannot but admire thy Forbearance towards me, But that thou shouldest not only forbear me, but follow me with thy Kindness, and never cease importuning me to return to my Duty and Happiness till thou hadst conquered me by thy Gracious Persuasions, O incomparable Love ! O amazing Goodness ! never to be sufficiently admired and adored ; Wherefore praised, for ever praised, be thy Grace which hath redeemed my Life from eternal Death, and my Soul from the nethermost Hell ; which hath rescued me from the Snare of the Devil, and the pernicious Bondage of my Lusts, and implanted in my Nature these heavenly Graces and Dispositions, and hitherto improved and advanced them towards my eternal Happiness. This, O my God, all this, I owe to thy free and undeserved Goodness, that I that was dead am now alive, that I that was lost am found, that I that was a Slave to my Lusts am made free from Sin, and translated into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, is purely the Effect of thy free Grace, and to be intirely ascribed to thy all powerful Goodness. Go on, O Lord, go on, I beseech thee, and perfect thine own Work, that so the Glory of it may be for ever redounding to thee ; and that as I have been hitherto a signal Instance of thy Goodness, so I may be an happy Instrument of thy Praise to eternal Ages. And grant, I beseech thee, that the Sense of thy unspeakable Kindness towards me, may so captivate my Soul and all my Faculties, as that I may be most intirely thine ; as that my Reason and Will,

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my Fear and Hope, and Love and Desire may from henceforth be all resigned up to thee, and for ever devoted to the Honour and Worship of thy infinite Glories and Perfections; and this I most humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, to whom with thyself and thy eternal Spirit be rendered all Honour, Glory and Power from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

After this Thanksgiving, consider briefly with yourself the indispensable Necessity of your Perseverance to the End, and how not only vain and fruitless, but also hurtful and mischievous to you all your past Labour in Religion will be without it; and then conclude your Morning Devotion with this *Prayer for Perseverance.*

O God, who art unchangeably holy and blessed, who art the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, and dost never swerve or vary from the essential Goodness and Purity of thy own Nature, look down, I beseech thee, upon me, a fickle, weak and mutable Creature, whom thou hast redeemed to thyself, and hitherto conducted by thy Grace and Spirit. Thou knowest, O Lord, the Weakness of my Nature, and how unable I am without thy Strength and Assistance to finish the Race which thou hast set before me; thou knowest what Temptations I must struggle with, and what Difficulties I must yet overcome, before I am seized of the blessed Prize I am contending for, wherefore since thou hast hitherto been my constant Support and Defence, forsake me not now for thy Name's sake, but as thou hast begun a good Work

in me, so I beseech thee to finish and compleat it; to uphold my feeble Soul by thy free Spirit under all Temptations and Difficulties, that so by patient continuance in well-doing, I may seek for, and at last obtain, Honour and Glory, Immortality and eternal Life. For which end, O Lord, preserve me from being over-confident of my own Abilities, and inspire me with a holy Jealousy of myself, that whilst I stand I may take heed lest I fall. And if at any time I should be so base and so unhappy, as to offend thee wilfully (which I beseech thee to prevent for thy Mercy and Compassion sake) O suffer me not to sleep in my Sin, but recal me instantly by the Checks of my Conscience, and the Convictions of thy Spirit, lest while I add Sin to Sin, and one degree of Wickedness to another, my Lusts should regain their Dominion over me, and thou shouldest be angry with me, and reject me from thy Covenant for ever. And that I may every day serve thee more freely and stedfastly, wean me, I beseech thee, more and more from those Temptations to Sin that are round about me, and give me such a true understanding of the nature of all the Goods and Evils of this World; as that neither the Flatteries of the one, nor the Terrors of the other, may ever be able to withdraw me from my Duty. And lest while I am mortifying my old Sins, I should carelessly permit new ones to spring up in my Nature, good God, do thou mind me to search and try my own Heart, and take a severe account event of the smallest Defects and Imperfections within me; that so I may correct and reform them in time, before they are improved into inveterate Habits. And grant that I may be alway so sensible of my own Imperfection, as that I may never rest in any present Attainment, but may still be pressing forward to the Mark of my high calling in

Jesus Christ. Suggest to me, I beseech thee, frequent Thoughts of my Mortality, that so, while I have Time and Opportunity I may be preparing for my Departure hence, and making provision for a dying Hour. In order whereunto assist me, O Lord, I beseech thee, strictly to examine and review my past sinful Courses, that so if there be any remains of Guilt abiding upon my Conscience, I may purge them away by proper Acts of Repentance, before I go hence and be no more seen. And grant that as I have formerly abounded in Sin, so I may now redeem that precious Time I have lost, by abounding in the contrary Virtues, that so, as far as in me lies, I may revoke and undo the multitude of my past Sins, by doing all the Good I am able for the future. And that I may hold out and persevere to the end, preserve and continue me in the Communion of thy Church, and suffer me not to be led away by the Errors of the Wicked, and to fall from my own Stedfastness. And finally, I beseech thee to grant that in the use of these blessed Means, I may so far prevail over the Infirmities and Corruptions of my Nature, as that at last I may have a clear and certain Feeling of my own Integrity and Uprightness towards thee; that so being from thence assured of thy Love, and of my Title to eternal Happiness, I may run the ways of thy Commandments more chearfully, and at last finish my Course with unspeakable Joy. And now, O Lord, I resign myself to thee, take me, I beseech thee into thy Care and Protection this Day, preserve me from all Evil, but especially from Sin, and quicken me by thy Spirit unto every good Work, that so I may serve thee with a free and chearful Mind, and make it my Meat and Drink to do thy blessed Will. All which I humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Mediation I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

In the *Evening*, when you enter in your Closet, consider what is the present Frame and Temper of your Mind ; and upon Enquiry you will perceive, either that through the present *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature*, you are *averse* to divine Offices, or that through *bodily Infirmary*, you are *indisposed* to them, or that through *Worldly-mindedness* and *Vanity of Spirit* you are *cold* and apt to be *distracted* in them, or lastly, that your *Heart* is very much *enlarged* and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorously *disposed* towards divine and heavenly things.

If upon Enquiry you find that through the present *Prevalency* of your *corrupt Nature* you are *averse* to divine Offices, endeavour to affect yourself with Shame and Sorrow for it, by representing to your Mind the great Impiety and Baseness, the monstrous Folly and Ingratitude of this your present Temper, and then offer up this following *Prayer*.

O My most gracious God, and most kind and merciful Father, thou art the best Friend I have in all the World, and hast shewn a thousand times more Love to me than ever I shewed to myself ; but after all the vast and most endearing Obligations thou hast laid upon me, this vile and ungrateful Heart of mine still retains some Dregs of its ancient Enmity against thee. Had I but the common Sense and Ingenuity of a Man in me, how could I think of thee without Raptures of Love ; how could I draw near unto thee without Transports of Delight and Complacency ! But, vile and ungrateful that I am, I can think of all thy
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Goodness with cold and frozen Affections, and can come into thy Presence not only with Indifference but Reluctancy. Good God, what am I made of! what an insensible Soul do I carry about me! O I am ashamed of myself, I am confounded with the Sense of my own Baseness; and yet, woe is me, I cannot help it. I strive to shake off this Clog of my corrupt Nature, but still it hangs upon me, and sinks and weighs down my Soul as oft as it is aspiring towards thee. O my God, have pity upon me, deliver me from this Body of Sin, ease my weary and heavy laden Soul of this grievous Burthen under which it labours and groans, and suffer not this Spark of divine Life which thou hast kindled in me to be oppress'd and extinguish'd by it; but so cherish it, I beseech thee, with the continual Influences of thy Grace, as that at length it may break through all this Rubbish that suppresses it, and finally rise into a glorious Flame. Then shall I always approach thee with Joy, and breathe up my Soul to thee in every Prayer; then shall my Heart be firmly united to thee in a devout and chearful Affection, and my Prayers shall come up as Incense before thee, and breathe a sweet-smelling Savour into thy Nostrils. Hear me therefore, O my God, I beseech thee, and strengthen me with all might in the inward Man, that for the future I may contend more vigorously and successfully against these vile Inclinations of my Nature which do so miserably hamper and depress my Soul, that so at last I may be a Conqueror and more than a Conqueror through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

If through any bodily Infirmary, such as Melancholy, Weariness, Drowsiness, or Sickness you find yourself indisposed to divine Offices, endeavour to

quicken your sluggish Mind with the Consideration of some one of the most moving Arguments of your Religion, such as the Love of God and of your Saviour, the Majesty of God's Presence in which you are, or the Blessed Immortality you hope for ; and then address yourself to God in this following *Prayer*.

O Blessed God, thou art a most pure and active Spirit, who dost always move with an uncontrollable Freedom, and art never hindred or wearied in thy Operations ; have Pity upon me, I beseech thee, thy poor infirm Creature, who am cumbred with this Body of Death, and so deprest by its manifold Frailties, that I cannot lift up my Heart unto thee. Thou knowest, O Lord, my Spirit is willing tho' my Flesh is weak ; my labouring Soul aspires towards thee, it stretches forth the Wings of its Desires toward thee, and would fain mount up above all earthly things, and unite itself with thee in eternal Love ; but alas ! its Fervours are dampt, and its Endeavours tired by this clog of Flesh that hangs upon it, and perpetually sinks and weighs it down again. O my God, draw near unto me, and touch my Mind with such a powerful sense of thee, as in despite of these my bodily Indispositions may attract and draw up my Soul unto thee. And if it be thy blessed Will, release me from these fleshly Incumbrances, and fit my Body to my Mind, that I may serve thee, as I desire to do with a fervent and a chearful Spirit. But if it shall seem good in thine Eyes to leave me struggling under these bodily Oppressions, Lord give me Patience and Submission to thy heavenly Will ; that so when I cannot approach thee with that Pleasure and Satisfaction I desire, I may be heartily content to serve thee
upon

upon any Terms, and that what I want of Vigour and Chearfulness in my Religion, I may make up in Truth and in Reality. And O let the Sense of these my present Indispositions cause me more vehemently to long after that free and blessed State, wherein with fixt and steady Thoughts, with flagrant Love and an entire Devotion of Soul, I shall ever worship, praise, and glorify thy Name, Amen.

If through present *Worldly-mindedness*, or *Vanity of Spirit*, you find yourself *cold* and apt to be distracted in your Religious Offices, endeavour to stir up your Affections by representing to yourself the Greatness and Urgency of your spiritual Wants, the Vanity of all outward things, and the Reality and Fulness of heavenly Enjoyments. And do what you can to recollect your wandering Thoughts, by setting yourself in the Presence of the Great God, to whose All-seeing Eye every Thought and Motion of your Soul is open and naked. And when by thus doing, you have composed your Mind into a more serious Frame, present this following *Prayer*.

O Thou ever blessed Majesty, who fillest Heaven and Earth with thy Presence, and art always listening to the Supplications of a world of Creatures that hang upon thee, open, I beseech thee, thine Ears of Mercy to me, who am unfit and unworthy to approach thee; who by setting my Affections upon things below, and plunging myself into the Cares and Pleasures of this Life, have estranged and alienated my Mind from thee, and lost that delightful Relish of thee, with which I was wont to draw near unto thee. And now that I

am retired from the World to converse with thee, and spread my Wants and my Desires before thee; those worldly Cares and Delights with which I have been too conversant, are importunately thrusting themselves upon me, to divert my Thoughts, distract my Intentions and carry away my Affections from thee; by reason whereof my Mind wanders, my Hope droops, and my Desires are frozen, and whilst I am drawing near thee with my Lips, my Heart is running away from thee. O my God have pity upon me, pluck my Soul out of this deep Mire, quicken, raise and spiritualize these my groveling Affections. Possess this Heart, which opens it self to thy gracious Influences, with such a strong and vigorous Love to thee, as may lift me up above all earthly things, and continually carry forth my Soul in vehement Desires after thee; that so I may always approach thee with a joyful Heart, being glad to leave the Company of all other things to go to thee, my God, my exceeding Joy. Give me a sober, diligent, and collected spirit, that is neither choaked with Cares, nor scattered with Levity, nor discomposed with Passion, nor estranged from thee with sinful Prejudice or Inadvertency; but fix it fast to thyself with the indissoluble Bands of an active Love and pregnant Devotion; that so whenever I prostrate myself before thee, I may presently be borne away far above all these sensible Goods in a high Admiration of thee, and a passionate Longing after thee. And now, O Lord, while I am addressing to thee, gather in, I beseech thee, my wandring Thoughts, and fix and stay them upon thyself. And O do thou touch my cold and earthly Desires with an out-stretched Ray from thyself, and cause them to rise and flame up to thee in Fervours answerable to my pressing Wants, that I may so ask that I may receive, so seek as that I may find, so

so knock as that it may be opened unto me, through Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

If after this you find your *Heart* is very much enlarged, and your *Mind* and *Affections* vigorously disposed towards God and heavenly things, fix your *Mind* a little while upon the Beauty and Excellency of his Nature, or upon some of the most affecting Instances of his Love, or upon the blessed State above, and then go on with this following *Prayer*,

O *Thou most excellent Being, thou infinitely amiable and adorable Majesty, thou Pattern of Beauty and Standard of Goodness, who art glorious beyond all Praise, and dost out-reach all Wonder, and comprehend all Perfection; blessed be thy Name, thou hast touched my Soul with a lively Sense of thy Glory; I feel it shining through me, and like an active Flame insinuating into my Heart; it fires my Love, cherishes my Hope, wings my Devotion, and diffuses a vital Warmth over all my Faculties; it raises me up into a heavenly State and fills me with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory; it captivates every Thought in Obedience to thy Will, and brings every Power of my Soul into Subjection to thee. Blessed be thy Name, thou hast conquered me by thy Love, and I resign myself to thee with a cheerful Heart. I am intirely thine, I am thy Servant, truly I am thy Servant, and in this Title I glory more than in all the Honours of the World. But though I am highly advanced and exalted by serving thee, yet thou art so infinitely happy in the boundless Perfections of thy own Nature, that thou canst reap no other Advantage from it but only the Pleasure of seeing thy poor Creature blessed*
and

and made happy by it. What then shall I render unto thee, O thou Joy of my Life, thou Treasure of my Love, thou supreme Felicity of my Nature! Alas, I have nothing but myself to give thee, nothing but this poor Heart, that burns with Love to thee, that pants and breaths after thee, and desires above all things in the World to be eternally united to thee in perfect Love. If I had ten thousand Hearts to love thee, ten thousand Tongues to praise thee, I would devote them all to thee, as freely and cheerfully as I do myself. For whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. O God, thou art my God, and my Portion for ever. In thee I am blest, and in the Light of thy Countenance I rejoice more than in all the Joys and Pleasures of the World. I am ravisht with thy Beauty, I admire thy Love, and from the bottom of my Soul adore thy Wisdom and Goodness. My Heart is ready, O Lord, my Heart is ready, I will sing and give Praise. Awake up my Glory, awake all the Powers of my Soul, I myself will awake and celebrate thy Praises. Praised be the God of Glory, praised be the God of Love, praised be the Father of Mercies, praised be the best Friend of Souls, for thy Goodness reaches to the Heavens, thy Glory shines throughout the Creation, and thy Mercy is spread over all thy Works. Who can comprehend thine infinite Beauties, who can rehearse thy noble Acts, who can shew forth all thy Praise? I do confess my Thoughts are infinitely too short, my Affections too narrow, my Expositions too scanty, to comprehend and sufficiently admire and celebrate thy Glory. But, O my God, thou knowest that I love thee, and, blessed be thy Name, I feel infinite reason so to do. O that I could love thee more, that I could love thee but as much as Angels and glorified

rified Spirits do, who yet cannot love thee as much as thou deservest, because thou deservest to be beloved infinitely. But my Soul thirsts for thee, and longs after thee. O when shall I be admitted into thy blessed Presence, there to see and admire, and love, and adore thee for ever ! when shall I shake off this Clog of sinful Mortality, that sinks and depresses me, and flee to those happy Regions of perfect Love, where I shall continually feed upon thee with inexpressible Delight, and befilled with a strong and everlasting Sense of thy Goodness. O thou that art the Beginner and Finisher of every good Work, be pleased to assist my holy Endeavours to withdraw my Mind more and more from these sensible things, that it may have a clearer sight of its heavenly Country from whence it came, and whither it desires to return ; that so having my Eye always fixt on that blessed Recompence of reward, I may live above this World, and in despite of all its Terrors and Allurements, persevere to the end in a steady and even course of Obedience. And now, O Lord, since thou hast been graciously pleased to inspire my Mind with these delightful Thoughts of thee, and to enlarge my Heart with such sweet Transports of Love to thee ; grant, I beseech thee, that they may not only please, but better me, that they may lift me up above all the Temptations of this World, and revive my Strength, and quicken my Endeavours, and compose my distrustful Heart into a stedfast Dependance upon thee, that so I may be fruitful in all good Works, and my Heart may be establisht unblameable in Holiness before thee, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. Amen, Amen.

After you have used one or more of the foregoing Prayers, according as they suit with the present Temper of your Mind, take a short view of your Defects and Imperfections, and especially of those that cleave most to your Nature; and briefly represent to your Mind the intrinsic Evil and Vileness of them, and how they clog your Religion, blemish your Nature, and obstruct your Happiness, and then conclude with the following *Prayer for Growth in Grace.*

O God, who art the most excellent Nature, the Perfection of all Beauty, and the Fountain of all Graces, who dost infallibly understand what is best to be chosen, and invariably chuse by the best and purest Reason; look down, I beseech thee, upon me thy poor defective Creature, who am ashamed of myself to see how unlike thee I am; how I am laden with Imperfections, and how after all my religious Endeavours, my Nature is still vitiated with unreasonable Lusts and Affections; how much Vanity and Impertinence there yet remains in my Mind, how much Perverseness in my Will, how much spiritual and carnal Iniquity in my Affections and Appetites. Lord, I have been long contending with this corrupt Nature, and yet upon all Occasions I find myself too prone to be. * Woe is me, even my fairest Graces have their Spots and Blemishes, my purest Dispositions, their sinful Intermixtures, and my best Works their Flaws and Imperfections. O my God, have pity upon me, who here lie sighing at thy Feet, under a miserable diseased Nature; and as thou hast begun the blessed Cure in

* Here name the particular Infirmities that stick closest to your Nature.

me, so for Christ his sake I beseech thee to compleat it; that being entirely recovered, and raised up unto Newness of Life, I may in the perfect Health and Vigour of my Soul, serve and glorify thee for ever. For which end, I beseech thee, confirm me more and more in the Belief of those immortal Pleasures beyond the Grave, which thou hast treasur'd up for those that love and obey thee; that by the Strength of a lively Faith, and vigorous Hope, my Soul may be raised above this World, and learn to despise and trample upon all its gilded Vanities, whensoever they present themselves either to allure or to terrify me from pursuing the heavenly Enjoyments. Excite in me such a vehement Thirst after those Rivers of Pleasures above, as may every Day render me more cool and indifferent towards earthly things, more contented and satisfied under all the Events and Issues of thy Providence, and more active and more vigorous in my heavenly Calling. And I beseech thee to inspire me with such clear and lively Apprehensions of thy essential Beauties and Perfections, and of thy bountiful Love and boundless Benevolence to all thy Creatures, as may every day more and more raise and improve my Love to thee; that this being the great Spring and Principle of all my Actions, may continually excite me to a chearful Obedience to thy Will, and a vigorous Imitation of thy Perfections, O cause me to love thee for thy self, and Religion for thee, and the Instruments of Religion in order to thy Glory and my own Happiness; that so founding my Content upon thee, and the blessed Interests of a virtuous Life, I may grow in Grace, and be rich in good Works, and go on with a satisfied and triumphant Spirit from Imperfection to Strength, from Acts to Habits, and from Habits to Confirmation

tion in Grace; and may be still more and more confirmed in all the heavenly Graces, till they are finally consummated into everlasting Glory. And when, by thy Grace and Assistance, I have perfectly conquered the corrupt Nature within, and the Temptations without me, and arrived into the State of everlasting Triumph, I will lay all my Victories at thy Feet, and with Palms in my Hands, and Hallelujahs on my Lips, celebrate thy Praises to Eternity. Hear me, O my God, in this and whatever else thou knowest to be needful for me, even for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose Name and Words I farther pray. Our Father, &c.

F I N I S.







